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SIKH CONCEPT OF THE DIVINE

Editor
PRITAM SINGH



**GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY
AMRITSAR**

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

A U.G.C. sponsored Seminar '*Mūl Mantra*' was organised by the Department of Guru Nanak Studies in March, 1973 in which a number of eminent scholars participated and presented scholarly research papers on various aspects of the Sikh doctrine of Ultimate Reality. The present volume contains selected papers presented in the Seminar. Besides, three more papers on related themes contributed later on, by Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia, Dr. Jagjit Singh Saluja and Miss Guninder Kaur have also been incorporated in this collection.

The proceedings of the Seminar have been edited by S. Pritam Singh, retired Professor & Head, Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, under the title *The Ultimate Reality—As Guru Nanak Saw it*. The work was waiting for publication for a long time. We feel happy that we are now able to make this valuable collection available to the scholars and readers interested in Sikh Studies. Our sincere thanks are due to our ex-Vice-Chancellor, Dr. J.S. Grewal for granting permission to publish the seminar papers in the book form and for his helpful suggestion in locating a more suitable title for this volume. Now, the collection has been entitled as *Sikh Concept of the Divine*.

It is my pleasant duty to express my deep gratitude to our present worthy Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Dinesh Chandra I.A.S., for conceding our request for writing a foreword to this collection. I am also thankful to Mr. Jagjit Singh Walia, Director, Guru Nanak Dev University Press, Amritsar for his technical guidance and keen interest in the printing of this book.

Deptt. of Guru Nanak Studies
Amritsar

Madanjit Kaur

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FOREWORD

It is believed by Sikhs that the *Jap(u)* of Guru Nanak is the essence of the whole *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and the *Mūl Mantra* at the head of the *Jap(u)* is the essence of the whole *Jap(u)* and, further, that *Ek Oamkār*, the opening constituent of the *Mūl Mantra* contains the essence of the whole *Mūl Mantra*. That is just a stylistic way of reminding people that the concepts enshrined in the *Mūl Mantra* about the Sikh Concept of the Divine form the basis of Sikh theology with such importance attached to the Sikh credal formula, it was but natural for the Department of Guru Nanak Studies of this University to undertake the elaboration of its philosophic and other implications. I am glad that a galaxy of learned men were good enough to extend their co-operation to the Department by writing papers on different constituents of the *Mūl Mantra*. I have no illusion that the present book, in spite of the definitive quality of the contributions and the high status of the contributors, may not be able to put a stop to all academic debates about the *Mūl Mantra*. In fact, it may even generate new interpretations. but the fact will remain that the present work is the first serious attempt, by a dedicated team of scholars of Sikh Studies, at exploring the original warp and woof of Sikh theology.

It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that I commend this work to all readers interested in Sikh and comparative religious studies.

S.P. SINGH

Vice-Chancellor

Guru Nanak Dev University
Amritsar

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18. Guninder Kaur was conducting research in Sikh Philosophy for her Ph.D. Degree at the University of Pennsylvania (U.S.A). She is the author of *The Guru Granth Sahib: Its Physics and Metaphysics*.

INTRODUCTION

All religions are unanimous that Ultimate Reality is unfathomable. Sikh religion is no exception. "After all", runs the Sikh Scripture's argument" how can a creature encompass, wholly, its own Creator?" Notwithstanding even more categorical statements than this, occurring repeatedly in all the Scriptures of the world, about the utter indescribability of the Only Omniscient, Omni-present, Essential Reality, we still find all of them referring again and again to the qualities that characterize it. These qualities or attributes, which vary from religion to religion in their order of priority, provide some of the basic material to interpreters working on the philosophy, sociology and cosmology of religions. In the Sacred Book of the Sikhs also, one may come across any number of divine attributes, but those which must have struck the founder, Guru Nanak, as the most prominent and essential, were woven by him in a short rhythmic composition, called the *Mūl Mantra*, the seminal formula, consisting of 14 basic structural units. A large majority of Sikhs recite these units in pairs: "

Ek-Oaṁkār;

sat(i)-nām(u)

karatā-purakh(u)

nir-bhau

nir-vair(u)

akāl-mūrat(i)

ajūni-saibhaṁ

gur-prasād(i)

Pairing reduces the number of units from 14 to 8. Between the protagonists of the 'fourteen' and the 'eight' units, we have others

for whom the *Mūl Mantra* consists of thirteen, twelve, eleven, ten or nine units. Such differences among scholars make the task of philosophical and sociological, even theological explorers of the Sacred Text rather difficult. It was primarily to make this task easier that a Seminar on *Mūl Mantra* was conceived by the Department of Guru Nanak Studies. The scheme materialised in 1973. The Department was able to persuade a number of eminent scholars to contribute paper each on various aspects of the basic credal formula. The present volume contains all these papers, besides those of Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia, Dr. Jagjit Singh Saluja and Miss Guninder Kaur, which were secured later. Most of these papers have already been published in the various issues of the *Journal of Sikh Studies*. A veteran Sikh theologian, S. Narain Singh, has sent his written comments on the papers of Dr. Trilochan Singh and Dr. Wazir Singh. These were duly published in the Journal. It is our hope that the present volume will prove to be a modestly valuable addition to the existing literature on Sikh Theology. Indications are that the Seminar has already succeeded in focussing the attention of scholars on the need of carrying on intellectual exploration of this important text. After the Seminar, Mr. Bakshi Singh Adil and Bhagat Singh Hira have brought out independent books on the *Mūl Mantra* and Mr. Jagjit Singh Saluja has recently earned a Doctorate on the same subject. Still greater attention is expected to be given to the subject following the publication of *Sikh Concept of the Divine*. If that happens, the Seminar will have served its intended purpose.

The compiler is grateful to all scholars whose timely and unstinted co-operation to him and the Department made the *Mūl Mantra* Seminar a success. He is also beholden to them for updating their papers. Dr. Madanjit Kaur and Shri Raghubir Singh Tak of the Department of Guru Nanak Studies, are to be thanked for the tedious task of proof-reading.

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Pritam Singh
Retd. Professor & Head

THE INTERPRETATIONS OF *MŪL MANTRA*

Pritam Singh

No manuscript written in Guru Nanak's own hand is known to exist. The ravage of time has done such tremendous damage to our manuscript-treasures that not even a fake claim seems to have been put up about the existence of any of the great Guru's personal records, although such a ruse, successfully played upon Sikh royalty or aristocracy, would have ensured a bumper crop of cash and kind for any clever fabricator. However, in view of the almost universal medieval practice of writing anything in Gurmukhi or Devanagari scripts without separating different syntactical units from each other, we may justifiably presume that the fair copy of the Guru's own compositions was also similarly written, unless it is proved that the Guru used Lande or Persian scripts, in which case our presumption about the Guru's unbroken, continuous writing, may become infructious, but the point made below about the difficulty in its legibility may still remain valid. The old Gurmukhi calligraphic system did not need many punctuational marks. That is why, we find most of the old manuscripts, whether of poetry or prose, using only one such mark, namely, the full-stop, represented by two short vertically-parallel lines. Correct reading of unseparated words used to be a difficult task and readers needed a long period of training to be able to read a written text correctly and fluently, improvising stops, signifying punctuation, such as commas, hyphens, question marks, exclamation marks or full-stops at appropriate places. In spite of all the training when it came to reading sutras, such as the one with which the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, the Sacred Book of the Sikhs, opens, differences could not be avoided. This sutra, created by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, seeks to present, in capsule form, some attributes of God. It begins with the Gurmukhi numeral one (ੴ) and ends with the word *prasād(i)* after which there is a full stop. It is called the *mūl* i.e. basic or root mantra. Different linguistic units, of which this mantra

consists of, are neither punctuated nor separated from each other, except that the initial numeral, on account of its physiology, had to stand apart from the text that follows it. Manuscripts are not wanting in which the next unit, namely 'O' (ੌ), also stands separated from the succeeding text, but that, probably, owes its independence not to any doctrinal or mystical importance attached to it, but to the normal propensity of the calligraphists to be more ornamental with opening letters. The rest of the text upto the last unit, *prasād(i)*, is normally found written as one continuous calligraphic whole, subject to the constraint of space.

Another prominent characteristic of the *mūlmantra* which makes for the multiplicity of readings and, therefore, of meanings, is the complete absence of independent prepositions, conjunctions and adverbs. In fact, even the verb is missing and the reader is left with one numeral and some nouns and adjectives only, to some of which are attached vowel symbols, namely i (ੴ) and u (ੴ), which according to some, carry prescribed grammatical values¹ and according to others, have no value at all.²

Further, the author of the *mūlmantra* betrays a clear preference for the non-purist, *tadbhava* linguistic tradition. The phonetic construction of *sat(i)* (ਸਤਿ> ਸੰ. ਸਤਯ) *purakh(u)* (ਪੁਰਖ>ਸੰ. ਪੁਰੁਸ਼), *bhau* (ਭਉ>ਸੰ. ਭਯ), *ajūnī* (ਅਜੂਨੀ>ਸੰ. ਅਯੋਨਿ) and *saibhamī* (ਸੈਭੰ>ਸੰ. ਸ੍ਵਯੰਭੁ or ਸੰਭਵ), in this not very long formula, for instance, confirms our view about this particular feature of the Guru's language. This tendency to own folk-pronunciation may also have provided some scope to a few self-educated interpreters to imagine far-fetched folk-etymologies in the case of some, at least, of the terms. A greater semantic rub is created by classical scholars, when they begin indulging in their intellectual pastime of imagining various textual permutations and combinations. The most confusing category of interpreters, however, is the one which exults in parading, rather pompously, all the possible meanings of the terms used in the *mūlmantra* without pinpointing the right one. The purpose of the following section of this paper is to show how confounding the interpreters become when a comparative study of their exegesis is attempted.

II

The *mūlmantra*, as given in the beginning of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, consists of 14 units, including the initial numeral 1 (ੴ). Textual variations exist in the two-volume Goindwal manuscripts, now lying in Patiala and Yahiyapur respectively. The text, sought to be made current by the Meharban School through their *Jap(u) Parmārth*, also differs with the authentic version in certain details. For the purposes of this study, these and other versions of the mantra, being unauthorised, have not been taken into consideration. We shall, therefore, base our discussion on the authorised version only. This version is reproduced below, with only one change, namely the provision of space between each linguistic unit:

1 (pronounced as 'ik' or 'ek') *O sat(i) nām(u) karatā purakh(u) nirbhau nirvair(u) akāl mūrat(i) ajūnī saibham gur prasād(i).*³

Our trouble starts with the starting numeral 1 (ੴ) itself. Professor Sahib Singh treats it as the modifier of the next unit 'O' (ਓ), because it signifies the latter's quality of oneness. He explains '1 O' (ੴਓ) as 'the Being that is One'⁴ and again as the 'One Timeless Person'⁵ clearly classifying '1' as the adjective of 'O'. So do a host of other commentators. We refer to only three of them here, namely Shri Vinoba Bhave,⁶ Dr. Gopal Singh⁷ and the learned translators of *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*.⁸ The late Bhai Vir Singh, on the other hand, did not subscribe to this view. He puts a comma between, '1' and 'O'. According to him:

He (Guru Nanak) has not used '1' at the very start of the *Jap(u)* as a numeral adjective; it has been used as a substantive which signifies His quality. It is His name...⁹

There are other scholars, such as Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh,¹⁰ Dr. Mohan Singh Uberoi¹¹ and Dr. Wazir Singh¹² who agree with Bhai Vir Singh in putting a comma after the numeral. Whether treated as an adjective or as a noun, the reference in both cases is to the oneness of God, but Swami Harnam Das elbows the numeral out of the *mūl mantra* by treating it as a pointer to the authorship of the *Jap(u)*. Says he:

...it stands for *mahilā* 1, i.e. Guru Nanak... In the absence of sound research on the Scripture, this digit was made a part of the text (of the *mūl mantra*) by the people. The fact is that it is not connected

with the text at all; it stands for the first Guru... If this '1' were not there, it would be difficult to ascribe the authorship of this text to Guru Nanak Dev.¹³

The ponderous Pandit Tara Singh Narottam, alludes to an unusual interpretation, which has been current in a section of Udasi and Nirmala scholars:

...According to some persons, this message is meant for men and women alike, though in the case of the Veda, women, to whatever caste they may belong, and all male members of the Fourth Caste, are debarred from uttering *Om*. In order, therefore, to be able to convey the message to all men and women, without violating the vedic ban, a sort of curtain has been hung (by placing '1') before *Om*, so that everyone may utter it in its veiled form. Speaking from behind a curtain is no sin...¹⁴

Giani Badan Singh and others, who prepared the first complete commentary of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* seem to give credence to the above statement of the learned Pandit.¹⁵ Giani Bakhshish Singh is another Nirmala stalwart, who subscribes to the same view in his commentary of the *Jap(u)*.¹⁶

As if all these schools were not sufficient, there exists a school of Omitters, one member of which, Dr. Ernest Trumpp, dispenses with the numeral '1' altogether and treats the following symbol *O* (ੴ) as the *mangal* the general invocatory superscription, having no intrinsic connection with the *mūl mantra*.¹⁷ Thus, for him, the *mūl mantra* proper begins with *sat(i)* and not with 1 (ੴ) or 'O' (ੴ). There are others who resort to a total black-out, not only of the numeral 1, but also of 'O'. We quote now from Dr. Balbir Singh:

Sadhu Mul Ram's *Ṭikā* (1842) begins with *sat(i)nām(u)*. No explication of ੴ occurs in it. Sir Attar Singh Bhadaur's *Ṭikā* in Urdu (1874) also starts with *sat(i)nām(u)*. The same is the case with Bihari Lal's *Jap(u) Parmārth* (1876). Hariji's *Pothī* also omits all commentary on "ੴ"¹⁸

How fertile is the ground for multiple schools of interpretation to

grow on the basis of syntactical value granted to a particular unit of the text by the interpreting authority! The differences, as we shall soon see, get wider and deeper and begin covering grounds other than the syntax, including pronunciation, etymology, doctrine, etc. Of necessity, we shall be selective rather than exhaustive, while attempting to document the differences that exist between one interpretation and the other.

'O' (ੴ) is believed to be the initial Gurmukhi character of the age-old mystic Indian term *Om*. It is pronounced as *O*, *Om*, or *Onkār* (*Om̐kār*), according to the predilection and cultural affiliation of the speaker. Swami Harnam Das quotes *Taittiriyaopaniṣad* to corroborate his view, but claims Vedic sanction for assigning the phonetic value of 'O' to 'ੴ'.¹⁹ Some readers, especially those belonging to Udasi and Nirmala denominations, generally pronounce 'O' as 'Om': while most of the Sikhs pronounce it as *Onkār*.²⁰ Normally, etymologists explain *Onkār* as the combination of *Om*+*kār* or *Oaṇ*+*kār* (ੴ+ਕਾਰ ਜਾਂ ੴਅੰ+ਕਾਰ)²¹ but Sohan Singh believes that *kār* should be read as 'ākār'. Says he:

Ikoamkār=1(*Ik*)+*Oam*+*ākār*... *Oamkār*. The word has been explained in many different ways by many different writers. But so far as Sikh writings are concerned, the prefix *Oam* makes its meaning clear. *Oam* consists of three letters *o*, *a* and *m*—*o* standing for *urdham*, i.e. above; *a* for *adham* i.e. below; and *m* for *madham* i.e. between. Thus the word *Oam* means that which is above, below and between i.e. the entire universe. The word *ākār* means the visible expanse or simply the expanse. Taking the three components of *Ik Oamkār* together, then, we can say that it means the One Universal Being.²²

The late Giani Sher Singh appears to anticipate Sohan Singh's break-up of *Oamkār* into *Oam*+*ākār* when he seeks to explain it as "the Creator of *ākār*."²³ The two, however, differ vastly in their explication of it.

For Pandit Gurmukh Singh, the *mūl maṇṭra* is a direct revelation from God and has, therefore, to be explained as God's own testament. He explains 'O' thus: "I am the One who grants protection to the people at the mere utterance of this phoneme..."²⁴ Apart from the difference in

meanings, the Pandit's first person singular turns into the second person singular in Giani Budh Singh who explains it as, "You are an embodiment of felicity and a treasure of bliss..."²⁵

Sant Ganesha Singh, using the third person singular says: " 'O' means that He is the Supreme Spirit who is felicity incarnate..."²⁶ For Nihal Singh Suri, it stands for the "meta-Brahman, the Supreme Lord."²⁷ Kartar Singh elucidates it as, "...One God, the glow of whose light is incessant. He who prevades everywhere immutably."²⁸

In spite of the unmistakable figure 1 which precedes 'O' in the *mūl mantra*, the commentators, who possess even a smattering of Sanskrit, do not forget to refer to the trinity of gods represented by the three sounds, of which 'Om' is believed to be constituted, namely, *a*, *u* and *m*. Bawa Hari Prakash for example, explains that:

akār (*a*), *ukār* (*u*) and *makār* (*m*), with a half *mātrā* added to them, make *Oaṅkāṛ*. *Akār* (i.e. *a*) means Brahma (the Creator), *ukār* (i.e. *u*) stands for Vishnu (the Sustainer) and *makār* (i.e. *m*) represents Shiva (the Destroyer), while the half *mātrā* is to be understood as the Fourth State...²⁹

Sant Sute Prakash, while accepting the 'Trinity Formula' prefers to explain the *kār* or half-circle above ॐ as, "pure Brahma, known as *amātrikā*."³⁰

Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh suggests "transcendent-immanent" as the intended meanings of 'O' + '*kār*'.³¹ Bhai Santokh Singh had expressed the same view earlier in his own style while contending, rather vehemently, that the Guru did not at all deviate from the Veda: "*O* is *puruṣa*, fortified with his maya..."³² He also provides the following interesting information:

...All the Upanishads, Shastras and Puranas recommend the worship of *Oaṅkāṛ*. Each of the Seven Independent Schools (of Philosophy) has its own nine brands of *Oaṅkāṛ*, thereby raising their number to 63. The reference here is to the attributive and grosser aspect of *Oaṅkāṛ*... His 64th aspect is subtle, non-attributive and without any trace of falsehood...*Oaṅkāṛ*, has ten nomenclatures...If all of them are to be explained that will mean padding the book

unnecessarily. We, therefore, confine ourselves to explaining on e nomenclature, namely *Oaṅkāṛ*. When *Oaṅkāṛ* is uttered, the whole body from the feet to the head, experiences an elevation, that is why it is called *Oaṅkāṛ* : the mere utterance of *Oaṅkāṛ* makes the flow of lifewind blow upwards—that is why it is called *Oaṅkāṛ* the more utterance of *Oaṅkāṛ* also directs the vital wind to the Tenth Door—that is why it is called *Oaṅkāṛ*.³³

Narottam believes that the text beginning with '1 O' and ending with *prasād(i)* is the original revelation granted by Lord Vishnu to Guru Nanak and represents the mystic essence of the Veda. Says he:

The Grammarians explain ॐ as the *Parmes'war* who protects in lieu of its mere utterance. They trace it from *av* which means 'protection' ... there are authors who derive it from a combination of three phonemes *a, u* and *m*, *a+u* becoming 'O' and *m* turning into a dot (representing nasalisation) to form the symbol ॐ ... Thus this composite unit comprises three constituents (*a, u* and *m*), *akār* representing *Virāt-Īśwara* and *Viśwa-jīva*, *ukār* standing for *Hrinyagarbha-Īśwara* and *Taijas jīva* and *makār* meaning *Māyāpati-Īśwara* and *Prāgya jīva*... This *Oaṅkāṛ* is identified in books as half *mātrā*. When the three *mātrās* are relieved of their stations and bodies, what remains intact is *Parmātmā*... which is also called *Tūriyā*...³⁴

The style and idiom adopted by the category of commentators who had proper training in the theological seminaries of the last century such as, for instance, Bhai Santokh Singh and Pandit Tara Singh Narottam, are all out of fashion these days and what overawed their readers till four or five decades ago, on account of their command of classical vocabulary and their plentiful knowledge, appears flat and incoherent to many of the modern Sikh readers, who accept, quite avidly the interpretations offered by scholars, well-grounded in Western philosophy.³⁵ For example, when Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh translates 'O' + *kār* as 'Transcendent-Immanent'³⁶ or 'Being-Becoming',³⁷ or when Dr. Mohan Singh Uberoi translates it as 'Logos-Creator',³⁸ they seem to make sense for them.

We move now to the next constituent of the *mūl mantra*, namely *sat(i)*. There are persons who regard *Ek Oaṅkār sat(i)* (ੴ ਸਤਿ) as one compact unit. According to them, the first comma in the text should be applied after *sat(i)*. Bhagat Singh Hira for instance, prefers to join *sat(i)* not with *nām(u)*, but with what precedes it (i.e. ੴ and ੴ). According to him *I O sat(i)* (ੴ ਸਤਿ) means, “*ik Oaṅkār* alone is *sat(i)*”.³⁹ The late Dr. Sher Singh does one better by placing the first punctuation mark after the next unit *nām(u)*, thus making “*I O sat(i) nām(u)*” as the first unit of the *mūl mantra*. His Punjabi rendering of the text reads as follows in English: “The One Brahman’s is the only existence which pervades everywhere.”⁴⁰ The late Pandit Kartar Singh of Dakha was sure that *sat(i)* enjoyed an existence, independent of the immediately following unit, *nām(u)*. Says he in his *Jap(u) Nisān*:

To regard *sat(i) nām(u)* as one complete unit and explain it as ‘True name’ or ‘True is whose Name’ is against all canons of *Gurbāṇī* Grammar...⁴¹

There are others, such as Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh,⁴² Dr. Mohan Singh Uberoi,⁴³ Dr. Gopal Singh⁴⁴ and Sardar Sohan Singh⁴⁵ who also grant *sat(i)* the status of an independent attribute with commas before and after it. Bhai Sahib Dharmanant Singh,⁴⁶ Principal Harbhajan Singh⁴⁷ and Swami Parmanand⁴⁸ also opt for separating *sat(i)* from *nām(u)*, the next unit. But, according to the reading acceptable to an equally impressive group of scholars, *sat(i)* must be joined with the next unit, *nām(u)*, to form the compound *sat(i) nām(u)*, meaning ‘True Name’ or ‘Truth is whose name’ or ‘True is whose name’. This group includes such commentators as Professor Sahib Singh,⁴⁹ Teja Singh,⁵⁰ and Taran Singh⁵¹ besides Bawa Hari Prakash,⁵² Macauliffe,⁵³ and others. Among these is Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia who in his paper on *akāl mūrat(i)* in this volume finds in *sat(i) nām(u)* “the identity of being and cognition”.

The late Dr. Bhai Vir Singh, after having treated *sat(i)* and *nām(u)* as independent units in his *Santhyā*, informs his readers that:

The *bāṇī* also permits the reading of the combined word ‘*sat(i) nām(u)*’, viz:

O my mind; always recite *sat(i)nām(u)*, *sat(i)nām(u)*.

Writes Bhai Gurdas: 'The true Guru Nanak caused the True Lord to be remembered in the form of *sat(i) nām(u)*...'⁵⁴

Bhai Vir Singh leaves the matter there, without clinching the issue under discussion. The inevitable result is that his readers remain in two minds even after going through the whole learned discourse on the subject.

We shall quote only four other scholars now. All of them are in favour of *sat(i)* and *nām(u)* being treated as one compound whole, *sat(i)nām(u)*, but the shades of their differences need be noted:

Nihal Singh Suri:

...Whose personal, real, primordial name is *sat(i)nām(u)*.⁵⁵

Kahn Singh:

...*sat(i)* (Truth) is His name or True is the name of the Eternal Being...At the time of meditation and recitation, it is not the word *sat(i) nām(u)* which is used, it is only *sat(i)*.⁵⁶

Jodh Singh:

The main thing about Him is that He has no name and that is why we always call Him *sat(i)*.⁵⁷

Bakhshish Singh Nirmala:

...Real are His name and Form, all other Names and Forms are unreal.⁵⁸

We have been able to cover almost half of the next adjoining constituent, *nām(u)* within our discussion of *sat(i)* but some of the most interesting etymological surmises remain to be introduced. Let us for example scan what Giana Singh Gayani (*sic*) has to say on this point:

Now we shall start explaining the vocable *nām*. It means God is 'well-known': further, it means that He is the 'root' of all creation; furthermore, *na+ām* (i.e. *na* meaning 'negation' and *ām* meaning 'disease') also means 'free from disease', alternatively, *na* stands for 'not', *ām* means 'common', therefore, *nām* also has the connotation of 'something which is special'...⁵⁹

Most of our commentary-writers agree that *nām(u)* is followed by a comma, but the writer happened to come across an old Udasi Mahant, Gopal Dev of Dhariwal (Distt. Gurdaspur) who insisted that the comma had to be replaced with a question mark. His reading, as that of a number of other traditionalists, was: “*sat(i) nām(u)?*” “He is the only ever-existent Truth. But what is His Name?” The reply, according to the Mahant’s version, is available in the next constituent of the mantra i.e. His Name is *Karatā* (the Doer or Creator). According to still another version, there has to be a hyphen between *nām(u)* and *karatā*, *nām(u)-karatā* i.e. the Creator of the Name.⁶⁰ Pandit Gurmukh Singh accepts the hyphen but gives his characteristic twist to its import. According to him the compound *nām-karatā* means “I, the supreme spirit, *am* the Creator of this universe of names and forms.”⁶¹ Incidentally, Swami Parmanand had suggested that “the word *rūpa* may be added after *nām(u)*, because all created things in the universe have names and forms ... Therefore, the vocable *nām(u)* of the original text is expressive of *rūpa* (form) also...”⁶² but S. Sohan Singh castigates the Swami and others of his thinking about the essentiality of the concomitance of *rūpa* with *nāma* by telling them that “a universal Being cannot be identified with any particular form and, hence, He is simply the Name ‘i.e. the Spirit’.”⁶³ Dr. Trumpp hyphenates *karatā* with the previous word but that word for him is not *nām(u)*, it is *sat(i) nām(u)*, so that his reading is *sat(i) nām(u)* and translates it as “The true name is the Creator”.⁶⁴

There is another set of scholars, including Bhai Sahib Dharmanant Singh,⁶⁵ Kartar Singh,⁶⁶ Dr. Sher Singh,⁶⁷ Sahib Singh⁶⁸ and Harnam Das,⁶⁹ for whom *karatā* is preceded and succeeded by commas and should stand on its own legs as an independent unit. The compilers of *Śabdārth* on the other hand, think that the creator of the *mūlmantra* intended *karatā* to be joined with the next unit, *purakh(u)*. They quote quite a few verses from the Scripture to prove that *karatā* and *purakh(u)* are one unit.⁷⁰ M.A. Macauliffe too joins *karatā* with *purakh(u)* but translates the compound simply as the “Creator”, consciously ignoring the presence of *purakh(u)*. This is what he has to say in justification of his stand:

It is perhaps not necessary to translate the word *purakh(u)*. It means

male or creative agency. The all-pervading spirit in union with a female element uttered a word from which sprang creation.⁷¹

Harbhajan Singh⁷² and Surinder Singh Kohli⁷³ also fight shy of *purakh(u)*, like Macauliffe. Trumpp puts a wedge between *karatā* and *purakh(u)* but his reading differs from all others in that he joins *purakh(u)* with the next unit *nirbhau* and translates the compound *purakh(u) nirbhau*, as 'the spirit without fear'.⁷⁴ Pandit Gurmukh Singh puts a question mark after *karatā* and makes us believe that *purakh(u)* is the Guru's own reply to it. For him *purakh(u)* means, the 'soul'.⁷⁵ Giani Sher Singh's synonym for *purakh(u)* seems to be 'a male person or husband'. He quotes from the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* the text which says, "There is only one *purakh(u)* in this world, all others are women".⁷⁶ But more than any one else, we must hear what Giana Singh Gayani has to say about this word:

He, who permeates wholly in the smallest as well as the biggest creatures, is called *purakh(u)*; *purakh(u)* also signifies the person who possesses *purakhatva* or virility; *purakh* : *pu* is the name of a hell and *rakh* stands for protection i.e. He who saves from hell; then, *pur+kh* : *pur* means a habitat and *kh* means 'prevalent' i.e. He who is prevalent in all the *puris*, namely, the human bodies, is called *purakh(u)*; *pur* means the *puris* which stand for human bodies and *kh* means 'destruction'; thus it also means 'He who destroys *puris* or human bodies'. And last of all, it means 'He who is the Lord of the *puris* i.e. of the human bodies...'⁷⁷

Of course, the Gayani does not come to the aid of the readers about what Guru wanted *purakh(u)* to mean in the sacred text.

Dr. Gopal Singh trying to be non-literal, translates the portion '*nām(u) karatā purakh(u)*' as "the All-pervading *puruṣa* the Creator".⁷⁸ Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh translates *karatā* and *purakh(u)* simply as "Creator, Person..."⁷⁹ Dr. Mohan Singh Uberoi, renders them as "Creator-integrator..."⁸⁰ while Sohan Singh does it as "the Creator, the controller and enjoyer..."⁸¹ For Prof. Sahib Singh *purakh(u)* signifies the omnipresence of God⁸² but Dr. Sher Singh's emphasis is on its omniscience.⁸³ Giani Kirpal Singh is one of the tribe which provides

interestingly far-fetched interpretations. One in the present case is that 'pur' means 'full of' and 'khu' means 'like the sky'.⁸⁴ "Pur", says Swami Parmanand, "means body. He who resides in the body in the form of effulgence, free of all its bonds, like an observer, is the *puruṣa*."⁸⁵ Vinoba Ji, reading *karatā-purakh(u)* as one word, explains it as, "...God is the Creator of the Universe. Also He is All-mind. 'Purukh' specifically implies that not Nature but God is the Creator..."⁸⁶

The first negative attribute, *nirbhau* (a compound of *nir*+*bhau*) which is the next unit in the text, has already been touched upon. It is the same word which the founder of Arya Samaj misused when he mounted an unmerited attack on Guru Nanak, and which, in turn, led to the souring of relations between the Sikhs and the Arya Samaj.⁸⁷ However, this aspect of *nirbhau*, not being our concern here, we revert to the subject proper with the caution that Swami Ji's statement is based on incorrect and untenable surmises and prejudice.

Swami Harnam Das summarises the different meaning ascribed to this unit by indigenous scholars, thus:

Nirbhau is interpreted as, (i) *nirbhaya*, *nir* meaning 'without' and *bhaya* meaning 'birth' or 'origin', that is 'He is without birth or origin'; (ii) He is without the bondage of worldly things; (iii) He is the embodiment of unadulterated fear, and (iv) nothing but the world is His form.⁸⁸

This quotation provides another peep into the wild adventurism of some of our old interpreters. Now let us see what the modern commentators have to say about *nirbhau*. S. Sohan Singh interprets it as "not being under an imposed discipline or restraint"⁸⁹ and "beyond restraint, the spontaneous". Dr. Wazir Singh renders it as "contradicted by none"⁹⁰ while Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh translates it as "Non-thesis"⁹¹ This scholar translates the next negative attribute *nirvair(u)* as "Non-antithesis",⁹² though generally speaking, its most obvious interpretation, "without enmity" or "without hatred" holds the ground among the majority of writers. S. Sohan Singh, arguing his case against this common interpretation protests that the reference here is to the absence of "internal antagonisms," "internal inconsistencies" or "contradictions".

It should, therefore, mean, “internal harmony.”⁹³ As usual, we come across inventive minds even in the case of this word of common use. For example, some traditionalists explain it as “One who is known for His specialization in enmity”, “Absolute Rancour”⁹⁴ and so on.

Nirbhau and *nirvair(u)* are the two attributes about which no punctuational controversy exists, but as soon as we arrive at the ninth unit, *akāl*, we find ourselves face to face with the same difficulty. It is another independent negative attribute *a+kāl* (sans+time) or has it to be paired with the tenth unit, *mūrat(i)* ? Avtar Singh Vahiria,⁹⁵ Giani Sher Singh,⁹⁶ Budh Singh,⁹⁷ Gulab Singh,⁹⁸ Shivdayal Singh alias Panna Lal Khatri,⁹⁹ and Hari Singh Gurmukh¹⁰⁰ as also Teja Singh,¹⁰¹ Sahib Singh,¹⁰² Swami Harnam Das,¹⁰³ etc. are in favour of the paired reading. Ranged against them are Sodhi Hazara Singh,¹⁰⁴ Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh,¹⁰⁵ Khushwant Singh,¹⁰⁶ Sohan Singh,¹⁰⁷ Dr. Sher Singh,¹⁰⁸ Bhagat Singh Hira¹⁰⁹ and Dr. Wazir Singh,¹¹⁰ who regard *akāl* as a complete entity in itself.

The question is, do these schools differ in their understanding of *akāl* and *mūrat(i)* units of the *mūlmantra* ? Yes, will be the answer, if one were to depend upon the evidence provided by scholars. Says Swami Parmanand :

a is negation, *kāl* is time and *mūrat(i)* is anything whose form is mutable; which exists at one time and does not at another... He who is immutable and retains its wholeness in space, time and substance, and remains unchanged throughout time—past, present and future, is called *akāl mūrat(i)*...¹¹¹

Bhai Santokh Singh explains *akāl mūrat(i)* thus:

‘*a*’ according to *Aṣar Koṣa* means Vishnu, ‘*k*’ means Brahma and 1, on account of the inherence of *laya* (merger) in it, stands for Shiva. *Karatā purakh(u)* assumes the form of *trimūrti* here, hence *akāl mūrat(i)*.¹¹²

Giana Singh Gayani conjures up a still more interesting etymology of *mūrat(i)*, when he says that ‘*mū*’ means ‘my’ and ‘*rat(i)*’ is ‘love’, so *akāl mūrat(i)* will mean, “I love the timeless.”¹¹³ According to Sodhi Hazara Singh, “*Niraṅkār* is formless but *Ekaṅkār* has a form. *Mūrat(i)*

means 'gender', 'shape' or 'form'.¹¹⁴ Giani Kirpal Singh gives four alternative meanings and the fourth is the one which had eluded all other previous commentators. He borrows the negating prefix 'a' from *akāl* and transfers it to *mūrat(i)* also which then is made to mean, "sans time, sans mass."¹¹⁵ Teja Singh explains *akāl mūrat(i)* as "an existence (*hasti*), beyond the beat of time."¹¹⁶ Sohan Singh ridiculing those who combine two words into a compound says, "...*Akāl-mūrat(i)* can only imply a timeless embodiment and it is for the reader to judge if we may call God a timeless embodiment?"¹¹⁷ Dr. Gopal Singh translates *mūrat(i)* as "the Being,"¹¹⁸ Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh does it as "Form"¹¹⁹ and Dr. Mohan Singh as "Form-manifester."¹²⁰ Trumpp takes *akāl mūrat(i)* to be one unit having a timeless form.¹²¹ Khushwant Singh renders *mūrat(i)* as "His Spirit prevades the universe"¹²² probably confusing *mūrat(i)* with *purakh(u)*, while Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia in his paper on '*akāl mūrat(i)*' included in this book, understands it as "Supra-temporal, time-transcendent nature of God".

Next in the serial order come *ajūni* and *saibham*. Usually, they are read as separate units. Dr. B.B. Chaubey suggests in his article in the following pages that *ajūni* should be interpreted as "not bound by place" rather than relating it to God's, non-appearance in the uterus. "But" warns Sodhi Hazara Singh "the *ajūni-saibham* pair has been used as a compound also..."¹²³ Swami Harnam Das is firmly of the opinion that "the whole context goes in favour of regarding *ajūni-saibham* as a single whole..."¹²⁴ Bawa Hari Prakash comes forward with the suggestion that "*sai*" meaning '*saṁsai*' (doubt) [Sk *saṁśaya*] and '*bham*' meaning '*nāśa*' (destruction), *saibham* would mean 'without doubt...' ¹²⁵ Dr. Trumpp derives "*saibham*" from *sambhava* (birth, production) and refers to its other forms used in the scripture, such as ਸੰਭੂ, ਸੰਭੋ, ਸੰਭਵਿਅਉ.¹²⁶ Swami Parmanand's interpretation is :

...he, who is born of the womb is *yonī sai*...but He whose birth is unrelated to the womb and always remains immutable is called *ayonisah* and *bham* means 'light'. God is free from any contact with the womb and is Himself light, therefore, He is called *ajūni saibham*.¹²⁷

After explaining *saibham* as “He is His own creation, not anybody else’s” Anand Ghan adds that “*sai* also means a hundred or innumerable; *bham* means from (*rūp*), effulgence (*tej*) and light (*prakāśh*).” Therefore, *saibham* will further mean, He who has innumerable forms, immeasurable effulgence and limitless light.¹²⁸ A novel interpretation is offered by Giani Badan Singh and associates :

What is He ? (He is) *akāl* ... He is free from *kāl* (time), which destroys everybody. *Mūrat(i)* : What is His Form or in other words, what sort of a person is He ? *Ajūnī sai* i.e. He is free from maya, has immaculate form (*sudh sarūp*) and is causeless. *Sai* in the Bangar region means *hai* (i.e. ‘is’) ...¹²⁹

The learned Gianis have introduced *sai* here as a verb in the *mūl-mantra*. Those who trace the etymology of *saibham* to *svayambhu* (self-created) are, of course, legion and we need not quote them. Among the moderns we come across such shades of difference as “Being of His own Being”,¹³⁰ “Self-existent”,¹³¹ “self-expression”¹³² and “self-dependent”.¹³³

With *gur prasād(i)* we reach the penultimate pair of units in the *mūlmantra*. Here also, we find among others, the Comma and the Hyphen schools joining issue with each other. Scholars, such as Sodhi Hazara Singh¹³⁴ and Giana Singh¹³⁵ give both the readings. Sohan Singh Galhotra chooses to join *saibham* with *gur* and *prasād(i)* and makes this combination yield the following meanings :

... born of itself, He is my Guru, through whose courtesy (I have been able to say this and am going to say or write more of it now).¹³⁶

For Sant Gulab Singh *gur prasād(i)* is a propitiatory invocation (*vastū nirdeś maṅgalācharan*) meaning “May the Gurus’ (i.e. God’s) kindness visit us!”¹³⁷ Prof. Teja Singh, conscious of the Muslim tradition of placing *bismillah* at the head of any writing, explains, *gur prasād(i)* as, “I begin with grace of the Guru whose attributes have been given from *Ik Oaṅkār* to *saibham*”.¹³⁸ According to Bhai Vir Singh,¹³⁹ Sahib Singh,¹⁴⁰ Parmanand,¹⁴¹ and a number of earlier scholars, such as Hari Ji¹⁴² and Anand Ghan,¹⁴³ *gur prasād(i)* means that God is achievable through the grace of the guru. Nihal Singh Suri, forgetting that *mūl mantra*

is Guru Nanak's own composition, explains *gur prasād(i)* as "God can be attained through the Guru (namely Sri Satiguru Nanak Dev Ji) only".¹⁴⁴ For Trumpp, the *mūl mantra* ends at "*saibham*" and *gur prasād(i)* is in the nature of a second invocation: "By the favour of the Guru",¹⁴⁵ the first being, *Om*! Dr. Gopal Singh places full stop after *gur* which he translated as "the Enlightener" and carries *prasād(i)* to the beginning of the mantra, so that his translation reads as "By Grace of the One Supreme Being ... The Enlightener".¹⁴⁶ The UNESCO translators render *gur prasād(i)* as "by the grace of the Guru, made known to men."¹⁴⁷ Khushwant Singh translates the compound as "by the Guru's grace shalt thou worship Him".¹⁴⁸ Macauliffe translates *gur prasād(i)* as "by the favour of the Guru",¹⁴⁹ but as he explains it in a foot-note, he does it under a sort of duress. He says :

We have translated these words in deference to the opinions of the majority of the Sikhs; but with several learned *giānis*, we have no doubt that they were intended as epithets of God—the great and bountiful.¹⁵⁰

With this we come to those who regard *gur* and *prasād(i)* as two separate units. *Gur* has been interpreted as one who spreads light (of knowledge) in the darkness (of ignorance).¹⁵¹ is greater than all others,¹⁵² is consciousness incarnate¹⁵³ and is worshipable;¹⁵⁴ while *prasād(i)* has been understood to mean sitting with tranquility;¹⁵⁵ propitiatory food;¹⁵⁶ above all sensual tastes;¹⁵⁷ everybody's resort like a temple;¹⁵⁸ delight and compassion;¹⁵⁹ 'Grace on all'¹⁶⁰ and free from all and impurities of form, colour, caste creed and ignorance.¹⁶¹

III

It is evident from the foregoing survey that a category of scholars has always been in the habit of receiving messages of their own choice from a given text, unmindful of what the author might have intended it to communicate. We all know that in its connotative function, religious language differs substantially from the lay idiom; we also know that with the passage of time languages undergo morphological and semantic changes and, further, that newly acquired connotations are often retrospectively imposed, consciously or unconsciously, upon old meaningful linguistic units. Such facts only rubricate the imperative-ness

of considering religious texts, or for that matter any old text, in the original contexts only. Some obviously funny distortions, in the interpretation of *mūl mantra*, can be easily traced to the non-observance of the contextual rule. Whether the confounding multiplicity of interpretations has been due to the old calligraphic system of the misappropriation of the functions of a lexicographer by the exegetist and the commentary-writer, or the weakness of the annotator-commentator to indulge in scholastic exhibitionism or even due to the sheer ignorance of the person trying his incompetent hand at a work which is much beyond his reach, the situation as it obtains today, is anything but satisfactory and poses a big challenge to Sikh scholarship. In fact, it was this challenge which prompted the writer to convene a get-together of scholars of Sikh Studies so that they might arrive at a consensus about the ideological implications of the *mūl mantra*. The differences (as a study of the papers submitted for the Seminar will reveal), do exist but judging from the helpful response of the scholars to the seminar and the range and quality of discussions that the papers engendered, it is difficult not to have a feeling that the re-interpretation of the whole Sikh Scripture is around the corner. This may or may not come about in actual practice, but the *mūl mantra* Seminar may succeed in arousing the pointed attention of the scholars of Sikh Studies towards the urgent need of discovering the original meanings of the *mūl mantra*. The writer is of the firm opinion that the key is available or, at least, can be reforged from the Sikh Scripture itself, which is the repository, not only of the complete works of Guru Nanak but also of five of his successors. It is in the Scripture that we come across all the constituents of the *mūl mantra* used severally and collectively. Similarly, Bhai Gurdas's work is another important source, contemporaneous with the Scripture, which should have been exploited thoroughly for dependable material on the subject. It is indeed surprising that no interpreter has ever thought of exploring fully these obvious sources. If at all, these have been used only as corroborative evidences and never as a primary source. The work is well worth doing and, if need be, the present writer may undertake it. But meanwhile, we shall hear what scholars gathered here have to say about the nature of Ultimate Reality as Guru Nanak has revealed it in his *mūl mantra*.

Notes

- 1 Teja Singh, *Śabdāntak Lagān Mātrān De Gujje Bhed*, and Sahib Singh, *Gurbānī Viākaraṇ*.
- 2 ਅਰਥ ਕਾਲ ਮੈ ਸਿਆਰੀਪਨਾ ਔਰ ਮੁਕਤਾਪਨਾ ਛੋਡ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਜੈਸਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੋਵੇ ਤੈਸਾ ਅਰਥ ਕੀਆ ਜਾਤਾ ਹੈ।
ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤਵਤ ਸਿਆਰੀ ਔਰ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਰਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਤੇ।
Giani Badan Singh *et al*, *Ādi Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib Ji (Saṭik)*, Vol. 1, p. 3.
- 3 ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ (*Ādi*) *Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib*, p. 1.
- 4 ਉਹ ਹਸਤੀ ਜੋ ਇਕ ਹੈ *Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib Darpaṇ*, Vol. 1, p. 44.
- 5 ਇਕ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜੋ ਇਕ ਰਸ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ। *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 6 "There is but one God..." *Commentary on Japujī*, (Tr.) Gurbachan Singh Talib, p. 2.
- 7 "...the One Supreme Being..." *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. I, p. 1.
- 8 "There is One God..." *Selections From The Sacred Writings of The Sikhs*, (Tr.) Trilochan Singh *et al*, p. 28.
- 9 ਇਹ 'ੴ' ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਜਪੁ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਢ ਵਿਚ 'ਸੰਖਯਾ ਵਾਚਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਣ' ਕਰਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਰਤਿਆ, ਪਰ 'ਸੰਗਯਾ' ਕਰਕੇ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਹੈ; ਜੋ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਦਾ ਲਖਾਯਕ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ।
Santhyā Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib. Vol. I, p. 2.
- 10 "1..." "The Essentials of Sikhism" in Gopal Singh (Tr.) *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. IX.
- 11 "...the one", Gopal Singh (Tr.) *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 1, (fn. 6.). See also Dr. Mohan Singh's *Panjābī Bhākhā Vigiān Ate Gurmat Giān*, p. 21.
- 12 "The One Positive Essence." *Aspects of Guru Nanak's Philosophy*, p. 83.
- 13 'ਇਕ ਅੰਗ' (ਮਹਲਾ ੧) ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਅਰਥ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ...ਇਹ ਏਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਘੱਟ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਠ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਵਾਸਤਵ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਹ (ਮਹਲਾ ੧) ਦਾ ਲਖਾਯਕ ਹੈ...ਜੋ ਇਹ ੧ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਜਪੁ ਨੂੰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੀ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਹੈ।
Ād(i) Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib Saṭik Arthāt Sri Jap(u) Ji Sāhib Saṭik, p. 8.
- 14 ਕੋਈ ਏਕ ਅੰਗ ਆਦਿ ਮੇ ਕਹਨੇ ਕਾ ਬੀਜ ਯਹ ਕਹਤੇ ਹੈਂ ਜੋ ਯਹ ਉਪਦੇਸ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਮਾਤ੍ਰ ਕੋ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਹੈ ਅਰ ਵੇਦ ਮੇ ਤੀਨ ਵਰਣੋ ਕੇ ਪੁਰਖੇ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਿਖਲ ਵਰਣੋਂ ਕੀ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਅਰ ਪੁਰਖੋਂ ਕੋ ਓ ਕੇ ਮੁਖ ਸੇ ਉਚਾਰਣ ਕਰਨ ਕੀ ਆਗਯਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਯਾਤੇ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ ਭੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਐ ਪੁਰਖ ਵੇਦ ਮੇਂ ਕਹੀ ਅਪਨੀ ਆਗਯਾ ਭੀ ਸਹੀ ਰਖਨੀ ਯਹਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕੇ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰ ਨੇ ਓ ਕੇ ਆਦਿ ਮੇਂ ਪੜਦਾ ਰਖ ਦੀਆ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਪੜਦੇ ਸੇ ਸਭੀ ਬੋਲੇ ਪੜਦੇ ਸੇ ਬੋਲਨ ਮੇਂ ਦੇਖ ਨਹੀਂ...
Ṭikā Gur Bhāv Dipakā, p. 11.
- 15 *Op. cit.*, p. 1.
- 16 *Jap(u) Ji Saṭik*, p. 5.
- 17 *The Adi Granth*, p. 1.
- 18 ਸਾਧੂ ਮੂਲ ਰਾਮ ਦਾ ਟੀਕਾ (ਸੰਨ ੧੮੪੨) 'ਸਤਿਨਾਮ' ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ੴ ਦਾ ਟੀਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸਰ ਅਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਦੋੜ ਦਾ ਉਰਦੂ ਟੀਕਾ (ਸੰਨ ੧੮੭੪) ਵੀ

ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਤੋਂ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹੋ ਹਾਲ ਬਿਹਾਰੀ ਲਾਲ ਦੇ 'ਜਪ ਪਰਮਾਰਥ' (ਸੰਨ ੧੮੭੬) ਦਾ ਹੈ।...ਹਰਿ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਧੋਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ "ੴ" ਦਾ ਟੀਕਾ ਨਹੀਂ।

Nirukt Sri Granth Sāhib, p. 6.

19 *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

20 i) "ੴ" ਦਾ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਹੈ "ਇਕ (ਏਕ) ਓਅੰਕਾਰ"। *Sahib Singh, op. cit.*, p. 46.

ii) ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਉਚਾਰਣ 'ਇਕ ਓਅੰ' ਸਹੀ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਸਿਖ ਸੰਪਰਦਾ ਵਿਚ 'ਇਕ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ' ਉਚਾਰਣ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

Bhai Kahn Singh (Compiler), *Gurmat Mārtaṇḍ*, Vol. 1, p. 98 (fn.1).

iii) Teja Singh, *Satigur Nānak Dev Di Bāṇi Japu Ji Sāhib Dā Ṭikā*, p. 37 (fn.)

21 *Saithyā, op. cit.*, p. 6; *Gursabād Ratnākar Mahān Kosh*, Kahn Singh, Bhai, p. 16; *Sahib Singh, op. cit.*, p. 44.

22 *The Seeker's Path*, p. 2.

23 ਅਕਾਰ (ਜਗਤ) ਨੂੰ ਉਤਪੰਨ (ਪੈਦਾ) ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ॥ *Ṭikā Sri Jap (ū)*, p. 1.

24 ਏਕ ਓਅੰ॥ ਅਰਥ ਮੈਂ ਏਕ ਹੂੰ ਓ ਅੰਕ ਹੀਏ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਮਾਤ੍ਰ ਸੇ ਰਖਯਾ ਕਰਨੇ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੂੰ॥
Sri Gurū Nānak Sidhānt Dipakā, p. 3.

25 ਤੂੰ ਮੰਗਲ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈਂ ਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਦਾ ਖਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਹੈ॥ *Jap(u) ji Sāhib Saṭik*, p. 5.

26 ਇਕ ਜੇਹੜਾ (ਓ ਕਹੀਏ) ਮੰਗਲ ਰੂਪ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹੈ॥ *Jap(u) ji Saṭik*, p. 1.

27 ਇਕ ਹੈ, ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ *Gurūmat(i) Bhāu Prakāshani Ṭikā*, p. 8.

28 ਇਕ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ, ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਪਰਕਾਸ਼ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਇਕ ਰਸ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ॥
Jap(u) ji Sāhib Saṭik, p. 1.

29 ਅਕਾਰ ਓਕਾਰ ਮਕਾਰ ਅਰਧ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਸੰਜੁਗਤ ਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ। ਅਕਾਰ ਕਹੀਏ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ॥ ਉਕਾਰ ਕਹੀਏ ਵਿਸ਼ਨੁ। ਮਕਾਰ ਕਹੀਏ ਸਿਵ॥ ਅਰਧ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਕਹੀਏ ਤੁਰੀਆ।

Sri Bodh Arthāvali Ṭikā Jap(u) ji kā, p. 8.

30 ਅਰਧ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਕਾ ਸੁਧ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਕਾ ਵਾਚਕ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕੋ ਅਮਾਤ੍ਰ ਕਹਿਤੇ ਹੈਂ।
Sant Sute Prakash Sadhu, Prayāi Ād(i) Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib, p. 3.

31 *Op. cit.*, vol. 1, (fn. 1).

32 ਏਕ ਜੋ ਮਾਯਾਸਵਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਓਅੰ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਕਰਤ ਭਯੋ॥

Garab Ganjani Ṭikā, p. 6.

33 ਸੂਬ ਉਪਨਿਖਦੇ ਮੇਂ ਅਰ ਸ਼ਾਸਤ੍ਰੋਂ ਮੇਂ ਪੁਰਾਨੋਂ ਮੇਂ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੀ ਉਪਾਸਨਾ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਪਾਦਨ ਕਰਯੋ ਹੈ। ਸਪਤਮਤ ਜੋ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਹੈ। ਤਿਨ ਸਪਤੋਂ ਨੇ ਨੌ ਨੌ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਕੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕਰਯੋ ਹੈ। ਇਸਤੇ ਭੇਦ ਤ੍ਰੇਸਫ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੇ ਹੋਤ ਹੈ। ਸੋ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਸਗੁਣ ਸਬੂਲ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਚੈਸਠਵੇਂ ਰੂਪ ਸੂਖਮ ਨਿਕਿਲਹ ਹੈ।ਐਰ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੇ ਦਸ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਸੂਬ ਹੀ ਸਾਰਬਕ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਭੀ ਲਿਖਤ ਹੈ। ... ਸੂਬ ਨਾਮੋ ਕੇ ਅਰਥ ਕਹੀਏ ਤੋ ਭੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਬਧਤ ਹੈ। ਤਾਂਤੇ ਏਕ ਜੋ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਤਿਸ ਕੋ ਹੀ ਅਰਥ ਕਰਤੇ ਹੈ। ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੋ ਜਬ ਉਚਾਰ ਹੋਤਾ ਹੈ। ਤਬ ਚਰਨੋ ਤੇ ਲੇਕਰ ਮਸਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਤ ਸਭ ਸ੍ਰੀਰ ਕੋ ਉਚਾਰ ਕਰ ਦੇਤ ਹੈ। ਤਿਸ ਕਰ ਕੈ ਇਸ ਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ। ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੇ ਕਹਨੇ ਕਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਉਚਾਰ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਤੇ ਹੈ। ਯਾਤੇ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ। ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਕੋ ਉਚਾਰਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਦਸ ਦੁਆਰ ਕੋ ਸ੍ਰੇ ਭੀ ਪਹੁਚਤੁ ਹੈ। ਇਸਤੇ ਭੀ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ।

Ibid., pp. 9-10.

- 34 ਓ ਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਬਯਾਕਰਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਮ ਲੇਨੇ ਮਾਤ੍ਰ ਸੇ ਰਖਾ ਕਰਨੇ ਵਾਲਾ ਪਰਮੇਸ੍ਵਰ ਕਹਤੇ ਹੈ ਅਵਧਾਤੂ ਸੇ ਇਸ ਕੇ ਬਨਾਵਤੇ ਹੈ ਅਵ ਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਰਖਯਾ ਹੈ ਯਾ ਤੇ ਰਛਾ ਕਰਨੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਓ ਕਹੇ ਹੈ ਔਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੋਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਅ 'ਉ' 'ਮ' ਇਨ ਤੀਨ ਅਖਰੋਂ ਕੇ ਮੇਲ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਕੇ ਬਨਾਵੇ ਹੈ, ਅ 'ਓ' ਕਾ ਓ ਮੰਮੇ ਕੀ ਬਿੰਦੀ ਹੋ ਕਰ ਓ ਬਨੇ ਹੈ। ਅਕਾਰ ਉਕਾਰ ਮਕਾਰ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਇਨ ਤੀਨੋਂ ਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਓਮ ਅਵਯਵ ਕਾ ਹੈ) ... ਅਕਾਰ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਛਾ ਅਰਥ ਬਿਰਾਟ ਈਸ਼੍ਵਰ ਔ ਬਿਸ੍ਵ ਜੀਵ ਹੈ ... ਉਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਸਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਹਿਰਨ੍ਯ ਗਰਭ ਈਸ਼੍ਵਰ ਔ ਭੈਸ਼ਜ ਜੀਵ ਹੈ ... ਤੀਸਰੀ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਮਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਸਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਮਾਯਾਪਤਿ ਈਸ਼੍ਵਰ ਔ ਪ੍ਰਗਯ ਜੀਵ ਹੈ - ਗ੍ਰੰਥੋਂ ਮੇਂ ਇਸ ਉਕਾਰ ਕੀ ਅਰਥਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੈ... ਪੂਰੇ ਤੀਨ ਅਵਯਵ ਹੈਂ ਉਨ ਅਵਯਵੋਂ ਕੇ ਜਬ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਔ ਸਰੀਰ ਭਾਗ ਦੂਰ ਕੀਯੇ ਤਬ ਉਨ ਕਾ ਆਧਾ ਭਾਗ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਸੇਖ ਰਹੇ ਹੈ ਆਧਾ ਭਾਗ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਔਰ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ ਹੈ... ਇਸੀ ਕੇ ਤੁਰੀਆ ਕਹੇ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., pp. 11-15.

- 35 The writer feels tempted to quote here Mr. Niranjana Singh Saral's devastating attack on all traditional Schools of Interpretation in his *Jhatkā Parkās*:

ਅਰਥ ਔ ਅਨਰਥ ਕੀ ਤਨਕ ਭੀ ਨ ਸੂਝ ਪਰੀ, ਸਾਤ ਸਾਲ ਸੱਤੋ ਵਾਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਪੁੱਟ ਮਾਰੀ ਹੈ।
ਏਛ ਮੁੱਠੀ ਖਾਂਡ ਔ ਇੱਕੀਸ ਮੁੱਠੀ ਬਾਲੂ ਰੇਤ, ਫਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੀਕਾ-ਟਿੱਪਣੀ ਨਿਆਰੀ ਹੈ।
ਕਾਟ ਪੇਟ "ਮਾਲਾ" ਕਾ, ਅੰਤ੍ਰੀਵ ਅਰਥ ਕਾਵ ਲੀਨ, ਐਸੀ ਕੁਝੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਕਾ ਭਿੰਡ ਭੰਡਾਰੀ ਹੈ।
ਅਰਥ ਖਿੰਡਾਏ ਔ ਅਨਰਥੋਂ ਕੇ ਢੇਰ ਲਾਏ, ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਈ ਗਿਆਨੀਓਂ ਕੀ ਕਥਾ ਹੀ ਨਿਆਰੀ ਹੈ।

- 36 *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 1 (fn. I).

- 37 *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. ix.

- 38 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 1 (fn. 6); see also the same author's *Punjābī Bhākhā Vīgīān Ate Gurmat Giān*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22, where it has been explained as "*śabad Jān bhāṇī hai, ese duārā sriṣṭi rachdā hai...*"

- 39 *Om Darśan*, pp. 27, 49.

- 40 ਕੈਵਲ ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਹੀ ਸਰਬ ਵਿਆਪੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਹੈ।

Jap(u) Ji Darśan, p. 15.

- 41 "ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ" ਇਸ ਸਮਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ 'ਸੱਚਾ ਨਾਮ' ਜਾਂ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਨਾਮ ਇਸ ਦਾ, ਇਉਂ ਅਰਥ ਖਰਨਾ ਏਥੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਹੈ।

Pandit Kartar Singh (Dakha), *Sri Jap(u) Nisān*, p. 14.

- 42 "Truth" *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. ix.

- 43 "Truth-existence"

Ibid., Vol. I, p. 1 (fn. 6).

- 44 "The Eternal" *Loc cit.*

- 45 "The Real" *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

- 46 *Jap(u) Parmārth Te Sadā Suhāg*, pp. 21-22.

- 47 *Gems Of Thoughts From Guru Nanak Bani*, p. 9.

- 48 *Sri Jap(u) Ji Sāhib Saṭik*, p. 24.

- 49 *Op. cit.*, p. 46.

- 50 *The Japuji or Guru Nank's Meditation*, p. 21; also *op. cit.*, p. 38.

- 51 *Gurū Nānak Bāṇī Prakāś*, Vol. I, p. 1.

- 52 *Op. cit.*, p. 8.
- 53 "Whose name is true" *The Sikh Religion*, vol. I, p. 195.
- 54 ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ 'ਸਤਿਨਾਮ' ਇਕਠਾ ਪਦ ਆ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਜਪਣ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਬੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੈ। ਯਥਾ :
ਜਪਿ ਮਨ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ॥
ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ :
ਸਤਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜਪਾਇਆ॥ *Op. cit.*, p. 16
- 55 ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਜਾਤੀ, ਅਸਲੀ, ਪਰਾ ਪੂਰਬਲਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ...। *Op. cit.*, p. 7
- 56 ਸਤਿ (ਸਤੜ) ਇਹ ਨਾਮ, ਅਥਵਾ ਸਤੜ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ...
ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅਤੇ ਜਪ ਸਮੇਂ 'ਸਤਿਨਾਮ' ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦਾ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਂਦਾ, ਕੇਵਲ ਸਤਿ ਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ॥
Op. cit., p. 129
- 57 ਇਹ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਗੁਣ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਉਹ ਦਾ ਕਦੀ ਨਾਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਦਾ ਉਹ ਨੂੰ 'ਸਤਿ' ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਪੁਕਾਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। *Ṭikā Jap(u) Ji Sāhib*, p. 7
- 58 ਸਤਿ ਹੈ ਨਾਮ ਤੇ ਰੂਪ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਔਰ ਨਾਮ ਰੂਪ ਝੂਠੇ ਹੈਂ। *Op. cit.*, p. 5
- 59 ਆਗੇ॥ ਨਾਮ॥ ਪਦ ਕਾ ਅਰਥ ਚਲਿਆ ਹੈ 'ਨਾਮ' ਕਹੀਐ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਹੈ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ॥
ਵਾ॥ ਨਾਮ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਮੂਲ ਹੈ ਜਗਤ ਕਾ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਨ॥ ਆਪ ਨ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਮੇਂ॥
ਆਮ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਰੋਗ ਸੇ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਾਮ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਨ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਆਮ ਖਾਸ ਪ੍ਰਪੰਚ...॥
Giana Singh Gayani, Ādi Bāṇi Sri Japū Sāhib, p. 6.
- 60 ਨਾਮ-ਰੂਪਵਾਲ । ਜਿਤਨਾ ਜਗਤ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਜਗਤ ਕਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਵਹ ਏਕ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਵਰ ਹੀ ਹੈ ।
(i) Parmanand, *Op. cit.*, p. 25
(ii) Sant Ganesha Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 1.
- 61 ਨਾਮ ਰੂਪ ਜਗਤ ਕਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਮੈ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹੂੰ *Op. cit.*, p. 1.
- 62 ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਆਗੇ ਰੂਪ ਕੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੋੜ ਦੇਣਾ ਕਥੋਂਕਿ ਜਿਤਨੇ ਉਤਪਤਿਵਾਲੇ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਹਨ, ਵੇ ਸਭ ਨਾਮ ਆਪਣੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਾਲੇ ਹਨ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਮੇਂ ਏਸੇ ਉਤਪਤਿ ਵਾਲਾ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਕੋਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਆਪਣੇ ਰੂਪ ਨ ਹੋ ।
Op. cit., pp. 24-25
- 63 *Op. cit.*, p. 3.
- 64 *Loc. cit.*
- 65 *Op. cit.*, p. 22
- 66 *Loc. cit.*
- 67 *Op. cit.*, p. 47
- 68 *Op. cit.*, p. 80
- 69 *Op. cit.*, p. 32
- 70 *Śabdārth, op. cit.*, p. 1.
- 71 *Loc. cit.*, (fn. 2).
- 72 *Loc. cit.*

- 73 *A Critical Study of Adi Granth*, p. 335.
- 74 *Loc. cit.*
- 75 ਇਸ ਜਗਤ ਕਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਕੌਨ ਹੈ ? ... ਸਰੀਰ ਰੂਪੀ ਪੁਰੀਓਂ ਮੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਰੂਪ ਪੁਰਖ ਮੇਂ ਜੀਵੇਂ ਹੂੰ।
Op. cit., pp. 3-4.
- 76 ਮਾਲਕ ਯਥਾ, ਇਸ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਰ ਸਗਲੀ ਨਾਰ ਸਬਾਈ॥ *Op. cit.* p. 3
- 77 ॥ਪੁਰਖ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਜੋ ਸਰਬ ਸੁਖਯਮ ਅਸਥੂਲ ਜੀਵ ਜੰਤੋ ਕੇ ਬੀਚ ਮੇਂ ਪੂਰਣ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਕਹੀਐ ਪੁਰਖ॥ ਵਾ॥
ਪੁਰਖ ਕਹੀਐ ਪੁਰਖਤ ਵਾਲਾ ਭਾਵ ਬਾਲ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ॥ ਪੁ॥ ਰਖ॥ ਪੁ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਜੋ ਨਰਕ ਪੁਨਾਮਾ ਹੈ ਤਿਸ
ਨਰਕ ਤੇ ਜੋ॥ ਰਖ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਰਖ ਤਿਸਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਹੈ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਪੁਰ॥ ਖ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਦੇਹ ਰੂਪੀ ਜੋ ਪੁਰੀਆਂ
ਹੈਨ ਤਿਨਾਂ ਪੁਰੀਆਂ ਕੇ ਬੀਚ ਮੇਂ ਜੋ॥ ਖ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਇਸ ਬਿਤ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਕਹੀਐ ਪੁਰਖ॥ ਪਰੁ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਦੇਹਿ
ਰੂਪੀ ਜੋ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਹੈ ਤਿਨਾ ਕੇ ਜੋ॥ ਖ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਾਸ ਕਰੇ ਸੋ ਕਹੀਐ॥ ਪੁਰਖੁ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਜੋ ਦੇਹਿ ਰੂਪੀ
ਪੁਰੀਆਂ ਤਿਨਾ ਕਾ ਨਾਥ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਕਹੀਐ ਪੁਰਖ॥ *Loc. cit.*
- 78 *Loc. cit.*
- 79 *Loc. cit.*
- 80 *Op. cit.*, (fn. 6).
- 81 *Loc. cit.*
- 82 ਜੋ ਸਾਰੇ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ *Op. cit.*, p. 46
- 83 ਉਹ ਹਸਤੀ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਸਿਸ਼ੂਟੀ ਦੀ ਕਰਤਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ 'ਪੈਲੈਨਰ ਤੇ ਡੀਜ਼ਾਈਨਰ' ਹੈ *Op. cit.*, p. 81
- 84 *Sampardāi Īkā Ād(i) Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib Ji*, p. 89
- 85 ਪੁਰ ਨਾਮ ਬੀਰੀਰ ਕਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਬੀਰੀਰ ਮੇਂ ਅੰਸਗਰਮ ਹੋਕਰ,
ਸਾਖੀਰੂਪ ਹੋਕਰ, ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਮਾਨ ਹੋਕਰ ਰਹੇ, ਤਦੀ ਕਾ ਨਾਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਹੈ। *Op. cit.*, p. 25
- 86 *Op. cit.*, p. 4.
- 87 "The aim of Nanak was, no doubt, good; but he did not possess any learning and was merely acquainted with the dialect of the (Punjab) villagers among whom he was born. He was quite ignorant of the *Vedas* and the *Shastras* and of *Sanskrit*, otherwise why should he have written *Nirbhau* instead of *Nibhaya*. Another proof of his ignorance of the *Sanskrit* language is his composition called 'sahskrit' (sic) hymns (*satotras*). He wanted to show that he had some pretensions to the knowledge of *Sanskrit*. But how could one know *Sanskrit* without learning it. It is possible that he might have passed for a *Sanskrit* scholar before those ignorant villagers who had never heard a man speak *Sanskrit*. He could never have done it unless he was anxious to gain public applause, fame and glory. He must have sought after fame or he would have preached in the language he knew and told the people that he had not read *Sanskrit*. Since he was a little vain, he may possibly have even resorted to some sort of make-believe to gain reputation and acquire fame..." *Light of Truth, or English Translation of the Satyārth Prakāśh*, (Tr.) Dr. Chiranjiva Bharadwaja, p. 443.
- 88 (ਅ) ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਯਕ : 'ਨਿਰਭਵ' ਅਰਥ ਵੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। 'ਭਵ' =ਪੈਦਾਯਸ (ਉਤਪਤਿ) ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੈ, (ੲ) ਭਵ=ਮੌਜੂਦਾਤ ਤੋਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਹੈ। (ਸ) (ਨਿਰ) ਕੇਵਲ 'ਭਯ ਸ੍ਵਰੂਪ ਹੈ, (ਹ) (ਨਿਰ) ਨਿਰਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹੀ (ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸ੍ਵਰੂਪ) ਹੈ। *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

- 89 *Op. cit.*, p. 4.
- 90 *loc. cit.*
- 91 *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. IX.
- 92 *Ibid.*
- 93 *Loc. cit.*
- 94 (ਨਿਰ) ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਵੈਰ ਵਾਲਾ, Swami Harnam Das, *loc. cit.*
- 95 ਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਥੀਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਅਰਥਾਤ ਮਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਂਵਦਾ ...
Gurū Dhaṇḍhorā, nd., p. 25.
- 96 “ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਮੂਰਤ (ਸਰੂਪ) ਕਾਲ ਜਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਪਰੇ ਹੈ” *Op. cit.*, p. 3.
- 97 “ਤੂੰ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਕਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਹਸਤੀ ਹੈਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਸਭ ਚੁਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਨ।”
Op. cit., p. 3.
- 98 “ਜਿਸ ਕੀ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਹੈ...” *Jap(u) Prakāś*, pp. 13-14.
- 99 (ਸੰਪੂਰਣ ਜਗਤ ਕਾਲ ਕੇ ਵੱਸ ਹੈ ਪਰੰਤੂ) ਤੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਰੂਪ ਹੈਂ
Jap(u) Jī Sāhib Saṭik, p. 8.
- 100 “Yeh pad alif, harf-i-nafī our kāl aur mūrāt do ismon se murakkab hai. In meñ se kāl ba-m’ ani waqt aur maut ke hai aur mūrāt ba-m’ ani sūrat aur sarūp ke hai, jo murad hastī aur zindagī se hai. Pas akāl ke m’ani us zāt-i-pāk ke haiñ ki jis kā koī waqt paidā’ish aur maut kā nahīñ hai. Arabī zubān meñ is lafz kā tarjumah Hai ‘u-lā-Yamūt aur Sanskrit meñ ‘ajanmā’ aur ‘ajar amar’ hai. Pas is tamām pad ke m’ani yeh hūe kih sri purakh jī ki zāt-i-pāk akāl mūrāt hai y’ani woh la-fanāh aur azālī aur abādī aur hameshāh qā’ m biz-hat’-Rahmumā-i-Didār-i-Haq, Pt. I, (Urdu), p. 181.
- 101 ਉਸ ਦੀ ਹਸਤੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਰੇ ਹੈ।
Satigur Nānak Dev Di Bāṇi Jap(u) Jī Dā Ṭikā, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
- 102 ਸ਼ਬਦ ‘ਮੂਰਤਿ’ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਲਿੰਗ ਹੈ, ‘ਅਕਾਲ’ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਣ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਭੀ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਲਿੰਗ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ‘ਅਕਾਲ’ ਇਕੱਲਾ ਹੀ ‘ਪੁਰਖੁ’, ‘ਨਿਰਭਉ’, ‘ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ’ ਵਾਂਗ ੧ੳ ਦਾ ਗੁਣ-ਵਾਚਕ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਪੁਲਿੰਗ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਵਿਚ (-) ਹੁੰਦਾ। *Op. cit.*, p. 46.
- 103 ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਕਰ, ਪਾਲ, ਮਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ, ਉਹ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਹੈ। *Op. cit.*, p. 41.
- 104 “ਕਾਲ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਸਮਾਂ, ਖਉ, ਨਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਮ੍ਰਿਤੂ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ... ਇਕ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ।”
Jap(u) Bichār, p. 14.
- 105 “Beyond Times”, *Op. cit.*, Vol. II.
- 106 “He is beyond time, immortal”, *Hymns of Guru Nanak*, p. 43.
- 107 “The Timeless”, *Loc. cit.*
- 108 “...ਉਹ ਜੇੜਾ ਮਰੇ ਨਾ।” *Op. cit.*, p. 84.
- 109 “...ਕਾਲ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਅਰਥਾਤ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਸਿਰਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਤ੍ਰੈ-ਹਦੇ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਹਸਤੀ ਹੈ।”
Op. cit., p. 95.

110 "Reality, transcending time" *Loc. cit.*

111 आकार का अर्थ निषेध है, काल का अर्थ समय है और मूर्ति नाम परिच्छिन्न परिणाम वाली वस्तु है, जो काल में न हो॥—वह सब अकाल मूर्ति हैं, जो परिच्छेद से रहित हो अर्थात् देश काल और वस्तु परिच्छेद से रहित हो तीनों कालों में ज्यों का त्यों एकरस रहे, नाम अकाल मूर्ति है।

Op. cit., p. 26.

112 ਵਾ ਏਕਾਖੁਰ ਕੇਸ ਮੇਂ ਅਕਾਰ ਬਿਸਨੁ॥

ਕਾ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਕੋ ਨੈ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲਕਾਰ ਤੇ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਵ ਕੋ॥

ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਤੀਨ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਬਨਿ ਬੈਠਯੋ ਯਾਂਤੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ॥

Op. cit., p. 14.

113 *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

114 *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

115 *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

116 *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

117 *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

118 *Loc. cit.*

119 *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

120 *Ibid.*, Vol. I.

121 *Loc. cit.*

122 *Loc. cit.*

123 ਅਜੁਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਨਾਮ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਭੀ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ॥

Op. cit., p. 17.

124 ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਪੁਕਰਣ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸਿੱਧੀ "ਅਜੁਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ" ਇਕ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 44.

125 ਸੈ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੰਸੈ ਭੰ ਕਹੀਐ ਨਾਸ। ਸੇ ਸੰਸਿਯੋ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 10.

126 *Op. cit.*, (fn. 1).

जा योनि द्वारा उत्पन्न हो, उसी का नाम योनि सै है—और जो योनि के संबंध से उत्पन्न न होकर नित्य ही ज्यों का त्यों एकरस रहे, उसका नाम अयोनिसह है और 'अ' नाम प्रकाश का है॥ परमात्मा योनि के संबंध से रहित भी है और स्वयं प्रकाश भी है॥ इसी वास्ते उसका नाम अयोनिसहम् है॥

Loc. cit.

128 ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਤੇ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਕਿਸੀ ਕਾ ਕੀਆ ਹੂਆ ਨਹੀਂ...।...ਸੈ ਨਾਮ ਸੈਕੜੇ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ, ਅਸੰਖ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ, 'ਭੰ' ਨਾਮ ਰੂਪ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ, ਤੇਜ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ, ਪਰਕਾਸ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ।

Gurbānī Tike, (ed. Rattan Singh Jaggi), p. 106.

129 ਵਹੁ ਕੈਸਾ ਹੈ (ਅਕਾਲ) ਸਭਕੋ ਮਾਰਨੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਾਲ ਸੇ ਭਿੰਨ ਹੈ (ਮੂਰਤਿ); ਸਰੂਪ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਪੁਨਾ ਕੈਸਾ ਵਹੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਹੈ। (ਅਜੁਨੀ ਸੈ) ਮਾਯਾ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਸੁਧ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਅਕਾਰਣ ਹੈ ਸੈ ਸਬਦੁ ਬਾਂਗਰ ਦੇਸ ਮੈਂ ਹੈ...।

Op. cit., p. 3.

130 UNESCO, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

131 Gopal Singh, *loc. cit.*

132 Kapur Singh *loc. cit.*, Vol. II.

133 Mohan Singh Uberoi, *loc. cit.*, Vol. I.

134 ਗੁਰ-ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਧੇਰੇ ਦੀ ਰੋਸ਼ਨੀ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ-ਮੂਲਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਪੂਰਾ ਵਾਕ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਪਰਸਾਦੁ ਕਰੇ, ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇਵੈ...ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ--ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਧ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ, ਸੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ,...ਵਾਕ ਅੰਸ਼ ਭੀ ਵਰਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ।

Op. cit., p. 18.

135 “ਗੁਰ। ਕਹੀਏ ਵਡਾ ਹੈ...।...ਪਾਰਮਕ ਵਿਦਯਾ ਕੇ ਦੇਨੇ ਵਾਲਾ ਭਾਵ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਵਕਤਾ॥ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਭੰਡਾਰਾ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਕਿਆ ਅਨੰਦ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ ਕਿਆ-ਮੰਦਰ ਅਧਿਸ਼ਠਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ॥ ਭਾਵ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਹੈ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ ਗੁਰ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਬਡਾ ਹੈ॥ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਮੰਦਰ ਜਿਸਕਾ ਬੈਠੁੰਠ ਰੂਪੀ॥ ਵਾ॥ ਗੁਰ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਬਡੀ ਹੈ॥ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨਤਾ ਜਿਸਕੀ ਭਾਵ ਦਇਆ ਜਿਸਕੀ॥”

Op. cit., p. 7.

136 ...ਉਸਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਤੋਂ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। (ਉਹ ਹੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ) (ਮੈਂ) ਐਸੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਨਾਲ (ਇਹ ਕੁਝ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਤਥਾ ਅਗੋਂ ਕਹਿਣ ਜਾਂ ਲਿਖਣ ਲੱਗਾ ਹਾਂ)

Jap(u) ji Sandeś, p. 13.

137 ਗੁਰੂ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਵਸਤੂ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ ਮੰਗਲਾਚਰਨ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਗੁਰ (ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ) ਕੀ ਹਮ ਪਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਹੋਵੈ॥

Jap(u) Prakāś, pp. 14-15.

138 ਉਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਨਾਲ (ਅਰੰਭ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ) ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ “ੴ” ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ “ਸ੍ਰੀ” ਤਕ ਦਿਤੇ ਹਨ।

Op. cit., p. 40.

139 ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ=ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 32.

140 ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਨਾਲ (ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ)

Op. cit., p. 47.

141 ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਔਰ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਜੋ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਵਰ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 29.

142 “ਓਹੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਪਾਈਐ-

Janam Sākhī Sri Gurū Nanāk Dev ji, Vol. II, p. 262.

143 “ਜੇ ਗੁਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਤਬੀ ਤੋ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਵਰ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ...”

Op. cit., p. 107.

144 ਕੇਵਲ (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ) ਗੁਰੂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Op. cit., p. 7.

145 *Loc. cit.*

146 *Loc. cit.*

147 *Loc. cit.*

148 *Loc. cit.*

149 *Loc. cit.*

150 *Ibid.*, (fn.4).

151 ਅਗਯਾਨ ਕੋ ਨਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਿ ਜੋ ਯਯਾਨ ਦੇਇ ਸੋ ਗੁਰ॥

Bhai Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

152 ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰ=ਵਡਾ ਹੈ।

Sant Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

- 153 ਗੁਰ॥ ਕਹੀਐ ਚੈਤਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ॥ Giana Singh Gayani, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
- 154 ਪ੍ਰਜਯ ਹੈ ਅਰੁ ਵਡਾ ਹੈ। Giani Badan Singh *et al*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
- 155 ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਬੈਠਣਾ ਹੈ॥ ਜਦੋਂ ਜਕਿਆਸੁ ਦੀ ਮਨ ਬੁਧੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਤਮੋ ਦਾ ਹਨੇਰਾ ਤੇ ਰੋਜ਼ ਦੀ ਭਟਕਣਾ ਮੁਕ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। Satbir Singh, *Jap(u) Te Uhde Pakkh*, p. 5.
- 156 ਭੰਡਾਰਾ॥ Giana Singh Gayani, *loc. cit.*
- 157 ਸੁਆਦਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਰੇ ਹੈ Sant Kirpal Singh, *loc. cit.*
- 158 ਮੰਦਰ ਕੀ ਨਿਆਈ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਸ਼ਠਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ॥ *Ibid.*
- 159 ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਨਾਮ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨਤਾ ਕੋ ਭੀ ਹੈ ਦਯਾ ਭੀ ਹੈ॥ Bhai Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
- 160 Wazir Singh, *loc. cit.*
- 161 ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਕਹੀਏ ਸੰਪੂਰਣ ਚਕ੍ਰ ਚਿਹਨ ਬਰਣ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ ਦੀ ਕਾਰਯਮਲ ਔ ਅਗਯਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਕਾਰਣ ਮਲ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਹੋਨੇ ਤੇ ਸੁਧ ਹੈ॥ Tara Singh Narottam, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

THE CLASSICAL CONCEPT OF MANTRA

K.L. Sharma

The word 'mantra' is derived from/मन्त्र+घञ्+अच्' and can be explained as *mananāt trā, ate yasmāt tasmāt mantrah prakīrtitah*.² Mantra is defined as preservation through contemplation. Etymologically, therefore, the mantra is a thought-conveying instrument.³ Its root, *man*, also means '*manana*' (contemplation), whereas its suffix *tra(त्र)* means 'to save' or 'to liberate'. Hence, mantra means liberation from the *samsāra* through *manana* i.e. contemplation. The word 'mantra' may also be derived from the root *mantrin(मन्त्रिन्)*, which means to speak or to whisper to advise or to take advice, to ponder over, to deliberate.⁴ It may further mean *āmantraṇa*, to call forth or to invoke the deity.⁵

Purpose and Efficacy of a Mantra:

Mantras are the thought-forms of objects. These thought-forms cannot be learnt unless they are taught. The Guru is expected to explain to his disciple how the mantra is related to the object. By understanding the inner significance of the mantra the nature of the object represented by it can be realized, for it is believed that the mantra and the deity are not different from each other. The power of deity is said to be inherent in his/her name, through the repetition and cultivation of which the worshiper may establish contact with the deity. It is presumed that with the aid of adequate mantras, any deity can be evoked. Mantras are, therefore, the key to all rituals in all religions and are also used in almost all forms of magic.

Each deity is represented by distinct mantras and while consecrating the idol of a deity the mantras connected with the deity have to be recited alongwith the other prescribed mantras.

The mantras are also concerned with the acquisition of some power, spiritual, mental or material. Constant repetition/recitation of a particular

text attracts the power or deity to whom the mantras are addressed. This power is then used for good or bad purposes according to the will and pleasure of the practitioner. One who uses these powers to harm others, often runs the risk of falling a prey to the wrath of the deity. The misuse of mantras is believed to stand in the way of spiritual growth.⁶

Mantras are the instruments with whose aid one may cross the limits of perception. Hindu life is so pervaded and regulated by mantras that these are also used for such other purpose as (1) attaining liberation; (2) worship of the natural phenomena in which divinity is considered to be manifest; (3) the control of semi-gods etc; (4) communion with deities, ghosts and spirits; (5) the acquisition of superhuman powers; (6) the feeding of ancestors and gods; (7) protection from and warding off evil influences; (8) the cure of diseases; (9) the destruction of enemies; (10) influencing the thoughts and actions of others; (11) purification from pollution, and (12) increase in will power.

Śabda-Raṇan:

The concept of *śabda-raṇan* finds its genesis in the Upanishads, according to whom it was the first cosmic vibration of the Unqualified Supreme Being. This was, actually, the sound theory established by *Mīmāṃsā* school. In Vedic Saṁhitas, *vāk* (speech) is depicted as a goddess, created by Prajāpati (the Primordial Creator). but in *Chhāndogyaopaniṣad*, *vāk* and *prāṇa* (life) are said to be the first *mithuna* or couple. In *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, *manas* (मनस्) and *vāk* are referred to as father and mother. Thus the union of ideation and creative vibration was implied in the very nature of Brahma. *Śabda-Brahma* is a self-conscious being with active impulses. while *śabda* is the first manifestation of that active impulse. *Śabda* in a mantra is regarded as Brahman, eternal, absolute, self-sufficient and authoritative. *Śabda* is not a mere verbal phenomenon, it is self-subsisting. Four forms of *śabda* i.e. (i) *sphota* (ii) *nāda*, (iii) *anāhata*, and (iv) *āhata*, constitute the eternal elements of the ethereal sound. All these sounds are transmitted by reverberations and go upward in four corresponding stages, namely, (1) *vaikhari*, the impact of the sound; the sound as actually heard;

(2) *paśyanti*, the reverberation before impact is made; (3) *pāryanti*, the point from which the movement of sound extent; (4) *spanda*, the pulsation or quivering that just precedes manifestation.⁷ It is because of this theory of *śabda*-Brahma that mantras, otherwise very cryptic and sometimes meaningless also, are believed to acquire, if repeated, potency from the divine spheres.⁸

It is believed that the rotating and shooting electrons are forms of vibrations or *śabda*, which constitute the divine music of the spheres and the adept can attune himself with the unstruck sound with the help of mantras, whereas auditory mechanism fails to detect it.

The other is the cause of *spandana* (vibration). The *Brahmaswarūp-chit* (super consciousness) is motionless and is known as *Chidākāśa* or (*śabda*-Brahma) and cause of all vibrations. Thought is a vibration of mental substance, known as *nāda*, and is the subtlest form of *śabda*. Mantra is said to be the manifestation of *nāda* (*mahānāda*, *nādāṇṭa* and *nirodhani*). Thus *Śabda*-Brahma, in this form of consciousness, is realised in three forms, *ichhā* (will), *gyāna* (knowledge) and *kriyā* (action), three *guṇas* (properties), *sattava* (cohesive power), *rajas* (power of action) and *tamas* (power of disintegration); three deities, Rudra, Viṣṇu and Brahmā and three *bindus*, sun, moon and fire. His Divine desire is *kāmakaḷā* (Creative Will). *Śabda*-Brahma is *parāvāk* (Supreme Speech) and *parā-śabda* (Supreme Sound) which is three-fold: *paśyanti* (casual sound) *madhyamā* (mediatory sound) *vaikhari* (perceptible sound). *Śabda*-Brahma in *mūlādhār* develops into *mātrikās* (*varṇa* or letters), *mātrikās* make *pada* (syllables) and syllables make *vākya* (sentences) of which the mantra is composed. Thus in mantra, *śabda-artha*, *nāmā-nāmi* (name-noumenon), *vāchakavāchya* (signifier-signified) and *rūpa-rūpamāna* (form figure) are objectified.⁹

Uttered speech evokes an idea, and the idea is nourished into consciousness as a mode of mental operation. This stage is known as *mantra-chaitanya* (mantra consciousness). Mantra-*vidyā* covers the whole process of conscious effort for the realisation of objective form through vibratory sounds which are directly related to *Chidākāśa* or *śabda*-Brahma.

Speech Elements in Mantras:

The mantras are based on conglomeration of different speech elements. These sounds produce effects, which are supposed to carry different values. For example, sibilants and simple aspirates have been conceived as neuters, serving the role of workmen, used in the lower forms of magic. Gutturals are considered to be priests, suited for the invocation of deities; cerebrals and palatals are regarded as warriors, suited for action and duty; labilals and liquids are treated as traders, suited for propitiation and persuasion.

Several elements of articulation may combine to form the monosyllables which are called the 'seed-mantra'. These represent the powerful monosyllables which are the roots of the power of speech and produce echoes in all the aspects of manifestation. The primordial language is believed to have been made of such ideophones and was, therefore, essentially monosyllabic. The syllables, which express the elemental forces of nature (*prakṛti*) are considered to be the true names of the deities and their images. The gods are bound to respond to these sounds.¹⁰ Thus, sound itself is the basis of the efficacy of the mantra. The world was created through the utterance of such monosyllabic sounds, and is maintained by the repetition of these basic sounds. Thus, it is believed that the mantras acquire the same creative power as existed at the time of the creation of the universe. This mystic efficacy is not present in any and every sound.

The practitioners of mantras recite them in such places as banks of rivers, lakes, etc. Similarly, some kinds of stones, roots of tree and *rudrākṣa mālā* (*Elaeocarpus Ganitrus* or its berry used for rosaries) *kumkum* (saffron), *sarson* (mustard) and other flowers are supposed to help in promoting holy vibrations. Some stringed instrument, such as *viṇā*, also accelerate vibrations. Everytime the vibration is sought to be created, the same mantra has to be recited. Sometimes, *saṅkīrtana* or community singing of the mantra becomes a part of the *sādhana*.

Nature of Mantras:

Usually, mantras in their sound forms are dynamic, but when they

are written in the form of letters or diagrams and are used as talismans, they are reduced to *yantra* or amulets and are called static mantras. Idol worship also becomes valid only when the consecration of the idol takes place in a temple along with the recitation of mantras. In fact, it is the *āmantra* which is celebrated and worshipped, through the bodily image of the deity. There are some sets of meaningful or meaningless words in the form of mantras which are believed to fulfil certain wishes. Such mantras are known to be as *puraśacharaṇa* (introductory mantra), *abhichāra* (spell), *Jhār-phūṅk* (warding off disease/evil influence) *chakra-pūjana*, *uchāṭana* (making repulsive), *māraṇa* (killing), *mohan* (bewitching).

According to certain Buddhist teachings even meditation on meaningless mantras can lead to the realization of the meaninglessness of all manifestation, and so to a true realization of the void or *śunya*. But in the course of time the term mantra which was earlier applied to any sacred verse cited from scriptures, came to mean cryptic syllables and words of power based on magical properties, believed to be inherent in sound. The mantra in this sense has been defined as an articulated astral potency.

Mantras are endless in numbers. The whole of the sacred Vedic text is believed to be made of mantras, with a seer, a deity and a *chhanda*. Mantras come down through a direct verbal transmission from the seer, who had first experienced them, otherwise they are not considered alive. Mantras are not effective, if they are learnt from a book nor can they be revived when once, their line of transmission is broken.

The seed-mantras are monosyllabic but other mantras may be in the form of sentences, however, their syllables are numerically fixed. For example, Shaivite mantras have five syllables, Vaishnavite mantras have eight and Solar mantras have twelve syllables. The mantras are recited in different ways for their efficacy, which may be as under:

- (a) *Kaṇṭhika* (throated)—Mantras expressed through recitation
- (b) *Vāchika*—Mantras uttered loudly for sacrificial purposes.
- (c) *Bhramara*—humming i.e. *jap* mantras

- (d) *Janānantika*—Mantras spoken in whispers and not to be heard by any other person.
- (e) *Karṇika*—Mantras whispered into the ears of novices or neophytes.

During the Sutra period we come across texts that regard mantras to be all-powerful. It was believed that the whole universe lay under the sway of the mantras which were mastered by Brahma *Gyānis* (knowers of Brahman). They were considered to be gods.¹¹ It was believed that human existence was inconceivable without the mantras.¹² The mantra was considered to lend meaning to life and inspire spiritual fervour.

Classification of Mantras:

Mantras are variously classified as masculine if they end with *vaṣat*, feminine if they end with *vauṣat*, and neutral if they end with *svāhā* or *namah*. There are solar and lunar mantras, sleeping (in the state of unconsciousness) and waking mantras (in the state of consciousness) and so on. Mantras are also divided into categories like (1) *siddha* (accomplished), (2) *sādhya* (to be accomplished) and (3) *susiddha* (well accomplished), Mantras are *bandhu* (relatives), *sevaka* (servants) and *poṣaka* (nurses). According to *Nirukta*, the mantras, in which the deity is imperceptible are known as imperceptible mantras. When the deity is perceptible, they are called perceptible mantras. The mantra, wherein the self is personified and praised, are called *ādhyātmika* mantras (concerned with spiritual experience). Mantras can also be categorised as: (1) *tāmsika* mantras (concerned with the magic of low order), (2) *rājsika* mantras (meant to bestow strength, courage and power) and (3) *sāttvika* mantras (relating to spiritual upliftment).

Similarly, there are (1) *japa* mantras—which are recited; (2) *ajapa* or non—uttered mantras, which are not repeated overtly. The latter are further subdivided into (a) *upāṇśu* (silent) mantras which are repeated without vocalisation and (b) *mānsika* mantras, which are meditated upon mentally.

But the generally accepted classification of mantras is *bija* (seed) *mantra* and *mūl mantra*.

Bija Mantra:

The most powerful class of mantras is that which includes in them *bijākṣara* and are known as *bijamantra*. *Bijākṣara* is a compound of the word 'bija', meaning seed, and *akṣara* meaning both 'syllable' and 'imperishable'. Though *bijākṣaras* are usually associated with particular deities, yet, in general, the term is applied to any pithy mantra which according to the Tantrikas fulfils two requirements: (1) it must consist of one syllable; (2) it must end in an *anusvāra* (nasal sound). In fact *bijākṣara* is believed to possess the essence of the whole system of philosophy or doctrine. Thus, by implication, one can master the whole philosophy by merely concentrating upon *bijamantra*. Its *anusvāric* (nasal) end and proper intonation creates cereberal vibrations, so that the effect of a mantra is there even after it has been recited. Adepts need to chant mantra only to benefit by its reverberations for a long time. It can pile up layers of power in the cereberal centres and conserve it like a battery, and this power can then be used for good or ill.

Om and other *bijākṣaras*, symbolizing different sects, are, therefore added before a particular mantra to enhance its potentialities in vibration. This *nāda* (sound vibration) is the first-produced source of *bijākṣra* in any mantra and the subject form of the *śabda*. Again, with *bijākṣra*, sometimes *vyāhṛtiyāh* (prefixed ingredients of mantra) such a *bhūr* (earthly), *bhuvah* (spheric) and *svāhā* (heavenly) are also included in order to make the mantra all-pervading. Similarly, many of the exclamations and ejaculations, pronounced at the end of the mantra, such as, *swasti* (fortune), *svadhā* (oblation), *svāhā* (offering), *vaṣat* (bravo), *śamyoh* (contentment) and *sānti* (peace, welfare) during the sacrificial ceremonies, aroused for blessings. The *vyāhṛitiyān* also become a part and parcel of the mantra. Buddhists, usually, use the word *phaṭ* (crack) at the end of each mantra. In order to scare away all evil spirits.

Mūl Mantra:

The *mūl mantra* is the most significant and dominating among the different categories of mantras. It is directly grounded in the seed syllable, and derives its thought consciousness from the same hieroglyph. Literally, the word 'mūl' (root) is defined as the cause of growth (*mūlam vridhi*

hetukam). 'Mūl' can also be described as some sort of a fluid causal state or concept, whose nature can be identified with that of thought, where there is equivalence between ideas, sounds, lights, colours, forms and numbers. It is conceived that the continuum underlying all perceptible form is the substratum of space i.e. *sat* (existence), the substratum underlying time is *ānanda* (blissful experience), while the substratum of thought is *chit* (consciousness). Thus the *mūl mantra* may be defined as the manifestation of original idea in terms of perceptible subtle sounds, *vaikhari* (perceptible sound), *madhymā* (mediatory sound), *paśyanti* (transcendental sound) and *parā* (subtle sound), identical with the undifferentiated causal immensity, representing the divine will, covering intentions, formulations and expressions. It has also been observed that the *mūl mantra* is generally revealed to the founder Guru of sect and carries the basic principles of the sect.

In the *Gīta* the axis of generation of the cosmos has been personified as an imperishable tree with its roots upward and its branches downward.¹³ Similarly with the *mūl mantra* which can also be described as the axis of thought (tree of knowledge), consciousness develops into the doctrine of a particular sect.

With yogis, man is the replica of the universe "*yathā piṇḍe tathā brahmaṇḍe*". Man has been described as the fragmentary universe or microcosm, while the Cosmic Being is the totality of macrocosm. Six centres of consciousness in human body have been located by yogis and co-related with the corresponding subtle worlds. The first *chakra* known as *mūl chakra* or *mūlādhāra* (root foundation) is situated near the rectum. *Mūlmantra* is directly related to *mūl chakra*, helps in awakening consciousness in *mūlādhāra* (foundational centre) and gradually moves upward to other centres such as *liṅgachakra* (sex centre), *nābhī chakra* (naval centre), *hṛdya chakra* (heart centre), *kaṇṭha-chakra* (throat centre), and finally *sahasrāra* (thousand) *chakra*.

As such the *mūl mantra*, generates thought-consciousness in the cerebral regions. Further, shortened forms of mantras may also derived

from the *mūl mantra*. Thus the *mūl mantra* can create, from its own ingredients, shorter mantra, incorporating in it, the seed syllable.

Notes

- 1 *Sanskrit Śabdārtha-Kaustubh*, (eds.) Dwarika Prasad Sharma, Tarnish Jha, p. 892.
- 2 मननात् त्रायते यस्मात् तस्मात् मन्त्रः प्रकीर्तितः
- 3 M. Monier William, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, pp. 485-486.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 *Patanjal Yoga Darśan* —3.37.
- 7 Benjamin Walker, *Hindu World*, Vol. II, p. 427.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- 9 Woodroffe John, *Shakti and Shākta*, pp. 499-575.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 देवाधीनं जगत्सर्वं मन्त्रधीनाश्च देवताः ।
ये मन्त्रा ब्राह्मणाधीना स्तस्माद् ब्राह्मणदेवताः ॥
- 12 नहि जीवन्ति जना मनाग् मन्त्राः ।
- 13 उर्ध्वमूलमधः शाखामश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् । *Giti*, XV, 1

EK OAMKAR

Parmanand

Guru Nanak did not adopt the alphabetical spellings of the first words 'Ek' (one) in *EK Oamkār* (ੴ) but expressed it through the figure 1 (੧). At other places in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* alphabetical spellings have also been used to denote the same idea.¹ Gramatically, the word 'ik' or 'ek' written in letters is a pronoun or an adjective, qualifying the noun 'Oamkār' but as figure '1' it has an independent position as well, which suggests that according to the author of this *mūl mantra* there is only one reality in the world, which is non-duality or monotheism. According to Shankaracharya this whole world with all its forms and names is unreal. It is a rope, mistaken in the dark, as serpent. As a reflection in a mirror or water is unreal, though we see it, so is this visible world. There is only One Absolute Reality which is seen in various forms and under various names. Thus the 'Absolute', without a second, is denoted by this figure '1'. The Absolute Reality is 'one', complete and entire; it cannot be divided; it is unimpairable and everlasting. It is God, who is All-reality, All-intelligence and All-bliss (i.e. *sat, chit, ānand*). He is the Creator. Though He manifests Himself in all forms, sentient and non-sentient being the enjoyer and the object of enjoyment, at the same time, yet, He remains One, changeless, constant and imperishable. He is never growing and never decaying. His oneness may become diverse but His oneness remains. He is not limited by Time and Space (*deś, kāl*). The visible diversity may seem to be real and appear to be the cause of all action in the world, but plurality is meaningless and it has no reality or worth. All this seems to be real because of that omniformed, omnipresent and omniscient one Absolute Reality which alone is seen everywhere.

In Mathematics, figure '1' assumes all forms. This '1' is found in all multiplied calculations. If this '1' is removed, ten becomes zero, so is the fate of all amounts e.g. hundred, thousand, million etc.

All these amounts (even the biggest one) are the various forms of figure '1'. They become non-existent if this reality is taken away from them. Diversity is a mirage, an illusion, a dream—the reality remains hidden unless we strive to find it out. It is to emphasize this belief that the figure '1' is placed in the beginning of the *mūl mantra*.

This idea of non-duality and of the Absolute 'oneness' without a second is explicitly stated in *gurbāṇī*.² This great idea of 'Universal Unity' is foreshadowed in some of the Vedic hymns.

Says the *Rig Veda*:

They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa and Agni;

He is Divine bird Garutman;

To what is one, the poets give many a name,

They call it Agni, Varuṇa, Matriśvān³.

The first verse of the thirty second chapter of the *Yajur Veda* voices the same Idea:

Verily He is Agni, He is Āditya, He is Vāyu, and verily He is the Chandramāh.

Verily He is Śukra, He is Brahmā, He is Āpah and He is Prajāpat⁴

The idea of Absolute 'oneness' is again expounded in the Upanishads. We find in the *Kathopanishad*:

The one controlling Power. He who makes His one form into many, is the inner atman of all beings—the wise who realise Him as standing in the self, to them, and not to others, belongs Eternal Bliss.⁵ Constant essential amongst (the forms) which come and go. Consciousness of all the conscious beings; the one, amidst the many, He who dispenses the objects of desire—the wise, who realise Him standing in the self, to them and not to others belongs the Eternal Peace.⁶

Second Interpretation of the word 'Ek':

Here it must be understood clearly that the idea of 'Illusionism' or 'Oneness', as explained above, is not accepted by Guru Nanak. Although he holds that the Supreme Self is the only Reality, yet according to him the diversity created by Him is not false or mere

illusion, because this diversity or plurality is the real result of His command (*hukam*). Hence the purposefulness of this visible world according to the Guru is both: “real as well as unreal”. It is real as it is the outcome of His command. His command can never be unreal. The *jīvātmā* secures His favour and residing in it he becomes virtuous and ultimately merges in the Ultimate Reality. But if the *jīvātmā* is deluded by the glittering maya, the world becomes for him illusion or unreal.

Jīva and Brahman are not different from each other but *jīva* remains apart from its source—Brahman, as separate entity, till he does not recognise Brahman by repeating His name under the guidance of a *satgurū*. Thus this relation between the soul and the universal soul is philosophically called *bhedābheda* i.e. difference and the sameness. Kabir says:

Sun sakhi piu mahi jiu base
jiu mahi basai ki piu.^{7(a)}

and

Khālik khalak khalak men khālik
sab ghaṭ rahayā samāi.^{7(b)}

The idea of command is clearly stated in the *Jap(u)* also:

The variegated and the multiformed world is the result of His Command. But this command cannot be specified or determined in words.⁸

From the *Sabad* which the *Akāl Purakh* uttered, the whole creation came into existence. It was His will. This will creates it, preserves it and destroys it as and when He desires.⁹

This *hukam* surpasses all explanations. Nobody can know what He created and how much He created. It is He and He alone who comprehends this whole. Who can know the Unknowable? The heaven and earth stand on the power of His word. Days and nights emanate from Him. The Infinite, gracing the “Throne of Truth” (*satya sinhāsana*) surprises it all rejoicing at the sight of His creation. He is eternal but all others move on with the wheel of births and deaths. I cite below a beautiful verse from the *Gurū Granth*:

Āpinai āp(u) sāj(i) āp(u) pachhāñiā.
Ambar(u) dhart(i) vichhoṛ(i) chandoā tāñiā.
Viñ(u) thammā gagan(u) rahāi sabad(u) nisāñiā.
Kie rāt(i) dinant(u) choj viḍāñiā.
Sachai takhat(i) nivās(u) hor āvañ jāñiā.¹⁰

By His will the whole cosmos came into existence. It is through His will that *Jivātmā* is deluded by His maya (i.e. magic power) and falls a victim to *kāl* (time/death). By His grace one can attain communion with Him. In short, knowingly or unknowingly, man abides by His supreme will.¹¹

Guru Gobind Singh corroborates it:
Pranavo ād(i) ekamkārā.
Jal thal mahial kiu pasārā.
Ādi purakh abagat abināsī.
Lok chattra das jot(i) prakāsī.¹²

The *Jap(u)* also confirms this fact:

Kitā pasāu eko kavāu.
Tiste hoe lakh dariāu.
Kudrat(i) kavañ kahā vichār.
Vāriā na jāvā ek vār.
Jo tudh(u) bhāvai sāl bhalī kār.
Tū sadā salāmat(i) nirañkār.¹³

Thus summing up his wonderful theory of *bhedābheda*, we may say that all is God, who is seen in various forms in the universes, which is nothing but His will.

Ek mah(i) sarab mah(i) ekā eh satigur(i) dekh(i) dikhāi.¹⁴

Compare with this what *Bhagavad Gītā* has to say on this:

This whole world came into existence from Me (God) and merges in the same way (in Me). O Arjun: there is nothing in the world except Myself (Supreme Self). This whole is transfixed in Me like the pearls in a thread.¹⁵

Again in the same book: "This entire (world) is nothing but Supreme Self".¹⁶ The same idea we find in the *Rig Veda* (X. 90.2): "*Puruṣa* is

this all, that has been and will be" (Macdonell).

Again, I cite two verses from the *Gurū Granth*:

- (a) *Ōannai nadar(i) kare jā dekhā dūjā koī nāhi.*
*Eko rav(i) rahiā sabh thāi ek(u) vasiā man māhi.*¹⁷
- (b) *Jin(i) sir(i) sāji tin(i) phun(i) goi.*
*Tis(u) bin(u) dūjā avar(u) na koī.*¹⁸

Hence Guru Nanak believes in absolute oneness without a second. It is to emphasize this idea of absolute oneness that he has put figure '1' in the beginning of the *mūlmantra*.

Third Interpretation of the word 'ek'

This figure '1' placed before *Oamkār* serves another purpose also. In the common conception of the then current Hinduism; when Guru Nanak appeared on our soil, that there were many gods, Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu formed the trinity as creator, preserver and destroyer. It was also held that God took birth not only in human form but Himself comes into the world in various forms, such as, *matsya* (shark), *kūrmā* (boar), *nara-simha* (partly human, partly tiger) and, finally, in human forms. Twenty four incarnations of God Vishnu were accepted, besides others, too many to be enumerated here. Some believed that Rama, the son of Dasharatha, was the incarnation of God, while others held Lord Krishna, the son of Vasudeva to be so. Countless male and female divinities were also regarded as Gods. Even Lord Buddha who did not believe in Vedic religion was accepted as one of the main ten incarnations of God. Thus the total number of gods came to 33 crores. This polytheistic religion brought with it the idea of image-worship. People forgot the *Rig Vedic* message:

The wise describe the one Being in various ways calling Him,
Agnī (Self-Refulgent), *Yama* (Ordainer of the world) and
Mātrīśvān (the life-energy of the Universe).¹⁹

Thus the Hindu society was seriously divided and one sect became the enemy of the others. Even the great Hindi poet Tulsi Dass did not like to offer homage to Lord Krishna in Vrindavana unless he held bow and arrows in his hand like Rama.²⁰

No doubt Tulsi Dass was a poet of harmony and good will who saluted all gods in his epic, yet he believed in the supremacy of Rama. It is a historical fact that due to his disunion some hostility or apathy of one sect of the Hindus towards the other caused among them a sense of despair, defeat and dishonour. At this critical time Guru Nanak appeared on the soil of our motherland with a message of hope strength and peace. Guru Nanak boldly declared that God is One. He is unborn, He is All Power and Invisible. He never takes birth, nor grows nor decays like other human beings. He alone should be remembered.²¹

No doubt the sacred *bāṇī* of the *Gurū Granth* is full of epithets like Rama, Hari, Raghunath, Gopal or Govind, we find references in it even to the episodes connected with the biographies of Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. But this does not mean that the *Gurū Granth* accepts the theory of incarnation. According to Guru Nanak, all these names denoted human beings of great merit. They were bound by Time. They were not *akāl*. Hence, they were not Supreme Beings. It is also contended that the great sages have the blessings of the Supreme Being. They come into world at the bidding of the Lord. Such men retire after doing the needful when God so desires:

*Nānak jo tis(u) bhāvai so thīai inā jaṁtā vas(i) kichh(u) nāhi.*²²

The tenth Guru declares in his *Akal Ustut(i)*:

*Ek Siv bhae ek gae ek pher bhae Rāmchandra
Krisan ke avtār bhi anek haiṁ.*

*Brahmā ar(u) Bisan kete bed au purān kete
simrt(i) samūhan kai hui hui bitae haiṁ.*

*Monadī madār kete Asunī Kumār kete
ans avitār kete kāl bas bhae haiṁ.*

*Pir au pikāmbar kete gane na parat ete
bhūm hī te huikai pher(i) bhūm hī milae haiṁ.*²³

Again Guru Nanak says:

*Brahmā Bisan(u) Mahes(u) na koī.
Avar(u) na disai eko soī.*²⁴

According to *gurbāṇī*, God does not live in temples or mosques, says Saint Namdev:

Hindū aṇṇā turkū kāṇā.

Duhāṇ te giāṇī siāṇā.

*Hindū pūjai dehurā musalmāṇ(u) masīt(i).*²⁵

God is one and He one without a second. Thus Guru Nanak gives us a message of one Godhood. This message of one Godhood repudiates all so-called gods—male or female—accepted by the Hindus at that time. We should not create Gods according to our imagination. It is improper and it would be injustice to our great Guru if we think that this idea of monotheism or of one God is taken from Islam or any other religion. Guru Nanak himself was a *Brahmavetā* and he has visualised this fact by his spiritual insight. How emphatically, in clear and unambiguous terms, the fact has been proclaimed in the following verse of the *Atharva Veda*:

This one immutable God is called neither the second, nor the third, nor the fourth. He is called neither the fifth nor the sixth nor yet the seventh. He is called neither the eighth nor the ninth and tenth. He takes care of all beings whether animate or inanimate in various ways.

All this power (of supervising and supporting this universe) is certainly centred in Him. He is the One, One alone and only One.²⁶

How lucid and clear conception of One God has been given in this immortal verse. We have already cited a verse from the *Rig Veda* also expressing the great idea of Universal Unity and one Godhood. I now reproduce it in the translation of Macdonell:

They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, And Agni;

He is the heavenly bird Garutman;

To what is one, the poets give many a name;

They call it Agni, Yama, Matriśvān.²⁷

(R.V.I. 16.6)

Guru Nanak very boldly proclaims to the world idea of one God in the following immortal verse:

Āpe hovah(i) gupat(u) āpe pargatīai.

Kīmat(i) kisai na pāi terī thaṭīai.

Gahir gabhir(u) athāh(u) apār(u) agaṇat(u) tūñ.

Nānak vartai ik(u) iko ik(u) tūñ.²⁸

The *gurbāṇī* is full of this clear and distinct idea of One God and has directed us to worship Him alone. Plurality of gods has wrought devastation in India as in other countries.

Meaning of *Oamkar*:

Ek Oamkār means ‘One God’. ‘Om’ is the proper name of God and *kār* is grammatically a suffix added to it to denote the sound of ‘Om’. According to the following *Vārtika Sūtra* of Panini, this suffix *kār* is added in the sense of *nirdeśa* (denotation: “*Varnātkārah*”: 2227). The examples are *akāra*, *kakāra* which means the sounds of ‘A’ and ‘K’ respectively. R.B. Prahlad C. Diwanjee explains the phrase *Oamkār* in his *Critical Word Index to the Bhagavad Gītā*²⁹.

Oamkār : Om is the sound produced by the word (*kār*) while recited/pronounced/during recitation.

Again he says “the particular sound, produced by the pronunciation of the syllable Om” (p.38). Thus grammatically *Oamkār* means the sound Om.

V.S. Apte in his *Sanskrit English Dictionary* explains it as :

- (i) The sacred syllable *Om*;
- (ii) The exclamation Om or pronunciation of the same.

Thus *Oamkār* means *Om*. The great sage Patanjali in his *Yoga Darśana* writes: *Praṇavah Om* is the *vāchaka* name of God.³⁰ It will be interesting to note here that the well-known vedic scholar like M. Winternitz could not properly understand the deep significance of this syllable. Winternitz is confused over the meaning of this word. He writes:

Finally, there is yet another kind of ‘prayers, as we cannot help calling them, with which we meet already in the *Yajur Veda*, and

with which also at later periods much mischief was done. They are single syllables or words which convey no meaning at all or whose meaning has been lost and which are pronounced in the most solemn manner at certain places. . . but above all the most sacred syllable 'Om'. This syllable, originally nothing but an expression of assent, was regarded by the Indians for thousands of years and still to the present day is regarded as inordinately sacred and full of mystical significance.

Then he adds the following in the foot-notes:

According to *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (vii. 18), 'Om' means. . . 'So be it', 'yes'. In the same way in *Chhāndogyaopaniṣad* (1.1.8). This syllable *Om* expresses assent, for when a person agrees to something, he says 'Om'. It is probably purely a coincidence that this syllable *Om* partly agrees with the Hebrew *amen* in meaning as well as in sound.³¹

From this citation we may comprehend that either this Great German Vedic scholar was confused or he did not try to consult ancient Indian scriptures for the proper understanding of this most important word.

There is no denying the fact that our earliest literature, during the Upanishads, did sufficient labour to explain this word. I shall try to give a brief summary of all that, later on.

Our sacred *gurbāṇī* contains numberless references to the sacred word *Oaṁkār*:

1. *Ek Oaṁkār sat(i)nām(u)*.³²
2. *Mere man taj(i) niṇḍā haumai ahaṁkār(u)*.
Hari jīu sadā dhāi tū gurmukh(i) ekaṁkār(u).³³
3. *Jal(i) thal(i) mahīal(i) pūrīā suāmī sirjanhār(u)*.
Anik bhāti hoi Pasariā Nānak ekaṁkār(u).
Ekam ekaṁkār(u) prabh(u) karau baṇḍanā dhiāi.
Guṇ Gobiṇḍ Gupāl prabh saran(i) parau harirāi.³⁴
4. *Bājigar(i) jaise bājī pāi. Nānā rūp bhekh dikhalāi*.

*Sāngu utārī thamio pāsārā. Tab eko ekamkārā.*³⁵

5. *Guṇ Gopāl gāvah(u) nit sakhīho sagal manorath pāe Rām.
Saphal Janam(u) hoā mil(i) sādhu ekāmīkār(u) dhiāe Rām.*³⁶
6. *Ekamīkār(u) ek(u) pāsārā ekai apar apārā..
Ek(u) bisathīran(u) ek(u) sampūran(u) ekai prān adhārā.*³⁷
7. *Oamīkār(i) brāhmā utpat(i).
Oamīkārū kiā jin(i) chit(i).
Oamīkār(i) sail: jug bhae.
Oamīkār(i) bed nirmai.
Oamīkār(i) sabad udhare.
Oamīkār(i) gurmukh(i) tare.
Onam akhar suṇah(u) bīchār(u).
Onam akhar(u) tribhavaṇ sār(u).*³⁸
8. *Oamīkār(i) utpātī kiā dinas(u) sabh rātī.
Vaṇ(u) triṇ(u) tribhavaṇ pāṇī. Ghār(i) bed chāre khāṇī.*³⁹
9. *Oamīkār(i) sabh srisat(i) upāī.
Sabh(u) Khel(u) tamāsā terī vaḍīāī.
Āpe vek kare sabh(i) sāchā āpe bhaṇin(i) gharāidā.*⁴⁰
10. *Jo tau bachan(u) dīo mere satigur(u) tau mai sāj sigārīā.*⁴¹

These citations clearly suggest how important this word is in the spiritual elevation of mankind. This word is full of deep significance, but the above noted German scholar has gone astray when he states that 'much mischief has been done' by it. Following are the further few meanings of this word according to V.S. Apte:

1. The sacred syllable *Om*, uttered as a holy exclamation at the beginning and end of reading of Vedas or previous to the commencement of a prayer of a sacred work;
2. As a particle, it implies : (a) solemn affirmation and respectful assent (so be it, *amen*); (b) assent or acceptance: (c) command;
3. Brahman

Shri V.S. Apte adds the following note to this explanation:

This word first appears in the Upanishads, as a mystic monosyllable and is regarded as the object of the most profound religious meditation. In the *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad* it is said that their syllable is all what has been, that which is and is to be, that all is *Om*, only *Om*. Literally analysed, 'Om' is taken to be made up of the three letters or quarter; the letter 'a' is *Vaiśvānara* the spirit of working soul in the waking world. 'u' is *Taijasa*, the spirit of dream-souls in the dreaming world of dreams, and 'm' is *Prajña*, the spirit of sleeping and undreaming souls; and the whole *Om* is said to be unknowable, unspeakable, into which the whole passes away blessed, above quality.⁴²

Originally *Om* signified God and God alone but later on it began to denote a religious solemn 'assent' given under the oath of God. In Upanishads, it is identified with Brahman, the word-sound and is recommended as the highest subject of meditation to the seekers of eternal truth. In *Chhāndogyaopaniṣad* we are asked to meditate upon 'Om':

Om (or *Oamkāra*) is indestructible.

He should be glorified or sung and

He should be worshipped and meditated upon.⁴³

Om (God) is Eternal (*akṣara*).

The whole universe is His manifestation.⁴⁴

Similarly in the *Kāṭhopaniṣad*, we are expressly advised:

The word, which all the Vedas (repeatedly) explain, the word which all men of penance proclaim and desirous of what (sages) practice *brahmacharya* (celibacy), I tell you in short that 'it is *Om*.'⁴⁵

The *Kāṭhopaniṣad* adds:

The syllable is indeed Brahman, this syllable is the Highest, for he who knows this syllable will have all his wishes fulfilled whatever they are.⁴⁶

The words 'Om' and *Oamkāra* are not different, as I have already explained it, grammatically. For instance, in *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa*, we find:

The Majestic Lord in the form of *Oamkāra* established in the beginning of the Veda, is always borne in their hearts by Indra and all gods and by sages.⁴⁷

This Lord in the form of *Oamkāra* is called *Gaṇanāyaka* (i.e. the Leader of Hosts) and He is invested with reverence in all works. He is called *vināyaka* (True Guide).⁴⁸

‘Om’ is taken from times immemorial to be one single letter, as such, it is described as *Ekākṣara* (i.e. one letter). The following citations from *Jaimini Upaniṣad* (I. 1.67) and *Gopatha* (1.1.67) corroborate it⁴⁹:

Adhaikasyaivākṣarasya rasam (Prajāpatih) nāśnukodādātm. Omityetasmai vā seyam vāgbhavat. Omeva nāmaīṣā. Tadetadakṣaram (oamkar) brāhmaṇo yam kāyam” ityādī.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* clearly tells us: “I am the Highest subject of knowledge called “*Oamkāra*”.”⁵⁰

Again it is, confirmed: “*Om* is the one-lettered Brahman (Veda).”⁵¹

The sacred words of the *Gurū Granth* join the ancient texts in expressing in the highest reverence of *Oamkār*.⁵²

Ekamkār(u) ek(u) pāsārā ekai apar apārā.

Ek(u) bisathiran(u) ek(u) sampūran(u) ekai prān adhārā.

Principal Teja Singh in his commentary on the *Japuji Sahib* remarks:

*Sāḍe deś vich sarguṇ rūp Brahm lai Om šabad age hi prachalat si, Gurū ji de vele ih, wādhā kitā giā ki ‘Om’ di thān ‘Oamkār’ šabad baṇāiā giā; ate isdā bhāv ih si ki uñ wāhigurū jisdā prakāś lagātār huñdā rahe.*⁵³

This statement is partly wrong. The word *Oamkār* has not been created or introduced during the time of our Gurus. I have already given a number of quotations containing the word *Om* as well as *Oamkār*, used in the same sense. The following pieces from the *Chhāndogyopaniṣad* and from the *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad* will strengthen my point that the word *Oamkār* existed as early as vedic period in the sense of *Om*.⁵⁴

- (i) *Oamkāra evadamisarvam.*
- (ii) *Sarvamoamkāra eva.*
- (iii) *Omitidam sarvam*

Significance of 'Om' and 'Oamkār'.

It will not be out of place to make certain observations here on the nature of God's names in accordance with the Indian tradition. They can be divided into two categories, i.e. (1) such as denote all his attributes, deeds and nature; and (2) those which specify only some of them and hence they are secondary. To the first category belongs the sacred syllable—*Om* or *Oamkār* alone, and all other names fall under the second category. That is why this sacred word *Oamkār* connoting all His attributes, deeds and nature has been placed in the beginning of the *Jap* as the first word referring to all qualities of God, specified or unspecified. According to Pāṇini's grammar or the other ancient grammatical treatises, the word *Om* has two positions: first it is the only undeclinable and underived word (*avyaya*) for God; secondly this sacred word is also formed by adding the suffix *man* (मन्) to the root *av* having nineteen meanings which we discuss later.

By terming *Om* as an indeclinable particle, it is intended that it undergoes no changes by addition of any suffix for gender, number or case, as other words always do. As soon as such terminations come into contact with it, they merge into it, leaving no trace of their individuality behind. For instance *Rām+am* (accusative singular termination) becomes *Rāmam*; *Rāmam simara* (remember Ram) but *Om simara* (remember God), and not *Omam*.

How beautifully this word suggests to us that God is changeless, everlasting and unbound by Time and Space. Whosoever comes into His contact attains communion with Him and merges into Him.

The word *Om* is made of three letters 'a'+ 'u'+and 'm', each of which signifies a number of God's names. 'A' stands for *Virāṭ Agni* and *Viṣṇu*; 'u' for *Hiraṇyagarbha*, *Vāyū* and *Taijas* and 'm' represents *Īśvara*, *Āditya* and *Prajña*.

Here the word 'Virāt' (*Vi+rāt*) means the shining one, the form of all forms taken together collectively resplendent with various objects which is often metaphorically described as one whose body is the universe, whose eyes are the sun and the moon whose is the wind and whose feet are the earth. The word 'Agni' does not mean here 'fire'. It means "God" the Adorable. He who is fit to be approached, known, accepted and worshipped by all, or He who being omnipresent knows, or pervades all-vide अभि गतो ति-4-IV—50.

Hiranyagarbha means one who is the source of and support of all light and luminous bodies (*Tasya bhāsā sarvamidam vibhāti Upaniṣad*).⁵⁵ According to *Brāhmaṇas* the word *hiranya* means light or energy.⁵⁶

(a) *Tejohirṇyam*

(b) *Jyotihirṇyam*.

and also *Śatapatha Brahmaṇa*.

The word *Viśva* is from the root *viś*, (to enter), with suffix *va*, signifying God, as the whole universe and all the objects in the word enter, i.e. are shrouded and pervaded by Him.

Vāyu means 'One who is the life and support of the universe, the cause of its dissolution, mightier than the mightiest'. It is from the root *vā* to move suffix *un* and augment *yuk*.

Taijas is from the root *tij*, to whet with *unādi* suffix *asun* (*tejas*), and again with addition of *an* to *tejas*. It means one who is resplendent and gives light to all lights.

Similarly *Īśvara*, *Āditya* and *Prajña* refer to God's qualities. *Īśvara* (from the root *Īś*, to be powerful and rule with suffix *vara*) refers to Him whose knowledge and powers are limitless. *Āditya* is a secondary formation from the noun *āditi* with suffix *nyat*. *Āditi* is a secondary formation from the noun *āditi* with suffix *nyanat*. *Āditi* is from the root *do* (to cut), with suffix *ktin* with negative meaning God who never dies or decays.

Prajña from the root *jñā* to know with the prefix *pra* and suffix

ka and then by adding termination *an*, it means 'whose knowledge is perfect or who is omniscient.'

Mystic Meaning of *Oamkār*:

Another charming and mystic explanation of '*Oamkār*' is given in the *Māṇḍukyopaniṣad*:

Om is akṣara (indestructible), the whole (universe) is His manifestation; the past, the present and the future, all is *Oamkār*. And whatever is beyond the three times (periods) is also verily *Oamkār*.⁵⁷

This is to say that all things in the world which are indicated by names are not different from names or are identical and as names are not distinct from *Oamkār*, so *Oamkār* is verily all this. Moreover, as the Supreme self is known through the relationship existing in names and their objects, they too are only *Oamkār*. Moreover, whatever is circumscribed by time and whatever else is there, that is beyond the three periods of time. (e.g. the Unmanifested and the rest) is, only *Oamkār*. The Upanishad (1.2) further says:

All this is surely Brahman.

The self is Brahman.⁵⁸

The self, such as it is, possessed of four *pādas* (i.e. quarters). Here the four *pādas* are something like four states of spiritual elevation.

The Upanishad describes the *pādas* in the following words:

The first quarter (the first step to knowledge of Brahman) is *Vaiśvānara*, whose sphere (of action) is the waking state: whose consciousness relates to things eternal, who is possessed of seven limbs and nineteen mouths and who enjoys gross things.⁵⁹

In other words there are four *pādas* (quarters) or stages or steps of soul of Supreme Brahman. At the first stage, self is called *Vaiśvānara* because He, the Self leads all beings, *naras* (to their enjoyments). He is called *Vaiśvānara* (All beings), since He encompasses all beings by virtue of His being non-different (in reality) from the self (*Virāt*) comprising all gross bodies, when our soul in awakened state is fully

aware of outside things (बहिर्मुखः) and not of Himself, then He enjoys gross objects e.g., sound, touch, *rūpa*, etc. he is (स्थूलमुक्). He enjoys all external things through His nineteen mouths; i.e. five senses of perception+five organs of action+five *prāṇas* (vital airs) plus mind, intellect, ego and mind-stuff (*mana*, *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra* and *chitta*) are metaphorically called 19 mouths, as the soul in the waking state enjoys external objects through them.

Similarly, such self has seven limbs. The *Chhāndogyopaniṣad* says:

Heaven is verily the head of That *Vaiśvānara*:

the sun is His eye, air is His vital force, space is the middle part, water is His bladder and the earth is His two feet.⁶⁰

Thus, the whole universe is the Self and Self is the whole universe, *Virāt*. This is the first step of the self in realization of the Supreme self. The second quarter is:

The second quarter is called *taijasa*. His sphere (of activity) is the dream state whose consciousness is eternal. He has seven limbs (described already) and nineteen mouths and who enjoys subtle objects.⁶¹

That is to say that in the first waking state the consciousness is associated with external things. This, thus leaves in the mind the corresponding impressions. In the second state of dreams, all these impressions on mind appear before the self, just in the waking state but without any external means. The mind is internal as compared with outer organs and then the Self sees on the canvas of mind all these things of outer world, in impressions only.

This consciousness of the Self is called *Taijas* (luminous). The *Viśva* is dependent on external gross objects, whereas the awareness that is experienced here, consists of mere impressions and hence this enjoyment is subtle.

Now the third *pāda* (stage) is explained:

Now the third state is of *Suśupati* (deep sleep) where the sleeper

does not desire any enjoyable objects and does not see any dream. This third *pāda* is called *Prajñā*. Here His sphere is deep sleep. In this state, everything becomes undifferentiated. The Self, He is (now) a mass of mere consciousness, who abounds in bliss, who surely is an enjoyer of bliss and who is the doorway (*mukha*) to the experience (of the dream and waking state).⁶²

In short since sleep having the unawareness of Reality is a common aspect of the two states of waking and dream, where perceptible gross objects are respectively present and absent, here, therefore, adverbial clause 'where the sleeper' is used, to indicate a difference from deep sleep. That is to say, the portion 'does not desire any enjoyable object or does not see any dream' distinguishes deep sleep from other two states. In this state He is called *Prajñā*, i.e. 'conscious par excellence', because in him alone is there the knowledge of the past, present and future. He is called *Prajñā* as He alone possesses the peculiar characteristics of greater undiversified consciousness. whereas the other two have diversified knowledge as well. In this state of deep sleep:

This one is the Lord of all; this one is Omniscient, this one is the inner Controller of all; this one is the Source (of all), this one is the place of origin and dissolution of all beings.⁶³

Having described earlier three (i) awaking, (ii) dream, and (iii) deep sleep, now the Upanishad writes about the fourth stage of sleep which is *Turiyā* as under:

They regard the fourth to be that which is not conscious of the internal world; nor conscious of the external world; nor conscious of both the worlds; nor a mass of consciousness; nor simple consciousness nor unconsciousness which is unseen; beyond empirical dealings beyond the grasp (of the organs) of actions; uninferable; unthinkable; indescribable; whose valid proof exists in the single belief in the self; in which all phenomena cease and which is changeless; auspicious and non-dual. That is the self and is to be known.⁶⁴

In the fourth stage, called *Turiyā*, we see that it is devoid of every characteristic that can make the use of words possible. Hence it is not describable through words and may be possible through the negation of attributes. According to this statement of Upanishad it is the non-casual, supremely real state, comparable to a rope, etc., by way of eliminating the three states. *Turiyā* is self-effulgent and does not require to be illuminated by any instrument of knowledge.

Guru Nanak praises *akal purakh(u)* as “You are *akāl* (unbounded by *kāl*), *alakh*, *agam* and *nirālā*. It is impossible to measure to know your power or reality. You are away from the three worlds. You are in *turiyā avasthā*.” Guru Nanak says:

Tū akāl purakh(u) nāhī sir(i) kālā.

Tū purakh(ū) alekh agam nirālā.

Sat santokh(i) sabad(i) ati sītal(u)

sahaj bhāi liv lāiā.

Trai vartāi chauthai ghar(i) vāsā.

Kāl bikāl kie ik grāsā.

Nirmal jot(i) sarab jagjivan(u) gur(i) anahad sabad(i) dikhāiā.⁶⁵

Jin chākhīā sei sād(u) jaṇan(i) jiu gunge miṭhīāi.

Akathai kā kiā kathīāi bhāi chālau sadā rajāi.⁶⁶

Now the Upanishad described that these four states are the parts of the word *Oamkār*:

Taijasa very Self, considered from the stand-point of the *akṣara* (syllable denoting it) is *Om*. Considered from the stand-point of the letters (constituting *aum* or *om*), the quarters (of the self) are letters (of *om*), and the letters are the quarters (of the self) and the letters are the quarters (i.e. stages) (they are) ‘a’, ‘u’, and ‘m’.⁶⁷

Here the Upanishad equates ‘that very Self’ with *Oamkār*. Those stages or quarters of the Self are the letters of ‘Om’, ‘a’, ‘u’ and ‘m’ constitute the syllable ‘Om’. It is further explained:

Vaiśvānara, having the waking state as His sphere (or quarter), is the first letter ‘a’, because of (the similarity of) ‘pervasiveness’ or

‘being the first’. He who knows thus does surely attain all desired objects and becomes the foremost.⁶⁸

This is to say that there is similarity between the self of the first quarter (of the awakening state) called *Vaiśvānara* (as explained above), and the letter ‘a’ on account of the pervasive character of both. Sound ‘a’ pervades the entire speech. *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* says that “the sound ‘a’ is indeed all speech.” Similarly the whole universe is pervaded by *Vaiśvānara*. As the letter ‘a’ has precedence over the *Vaiśvānara* too, hence both are ‘*ādi mat*’.

He, who is *Taijasa*, with the state of dream as his sphere of activity is the second letter ‘u’ (of Om) because of the similarity of excellence and intermediateness.⁶⁹

It means that the Self, when in the state of dream, is called *Taijasa*, is equated with the second *mātrā* of *Om*, i.e. ‘u’, ‘u’ means *Utkarṣa* (i.e. excellence). The letter ‘u’ is better, as it were, than the letter ‘a’. Similarly, *Taijasa* is better than *Viśva* because both of them have intermediate position. The letter ‘u’ is between ‘a’ and ‘m’ : so that *Taijasa* also occurs between the *Vaiśvānara* and *Prajña* (i.e. the third stage).

Prajña with His sphere of activity in the deep sleep state is ‘m’ the third letter of ‘*Om*’. (It is so called), because of measuring or because of absorption.⁷⁰

Prajña is the third stage of deep sleep. It is equated with ‘m’ because of a couple of similarities between the two. Shankaracharya explains these: (1) as barley is measured by a pot called *prastha*, so are *Vaiśvānara* and *Taijasa* measured, as it were, because of their entry into, and coming out of *Prajña* at the times of dissolution and origination. Similarly, when the pronounciation of the syllable ‘*Om*’ comes to an end, the letters ‘a’ and ‘u’ appear to enter into the last letter ‘m’ and the vibrations resound similarity of ‘absorption’ (A-pitch) or merging in. When we pronounce ‘*Om*’, ‘a’ and ‘u’ appear to get merged or absorbed into the last letter ‘m’. *Viśva* and *Taijasa* also merge into *Prajña* during deep sleep.

Now Upanishad gives the fourth *Turiyā* state as:

The partless ('a' *mātrā*) '*Oamkār*' is *Turiyā*—beyond empirical relations, the culmination of phenomenal world (i.e. the ultimate limit of the negation of the world), the auspicious (Shiva) and the non-dual *Oamkār* (*Om*) is the surely the self.⁷¹

In short 'a' represents the gross universe, the waking and *viśwa* 'u' represents the subtle world, dream, and *taijasa*, and 'm' represents the casual state, sleep and *Prajña*. The earlier ones merge into the latter ones. In this way every thing merges into '*Om*'. At the time of the meditation of '*Om*' all teachers' instructions flash in the mind of the meditator that everything is Absolute Brahman. Then all the phenomenal world. merged in '*Om*' disappears in Brahman and then there remains no further goal to attain for him.

Etymological Meaning of '*Om*':

We have given above the mystic explanation as advanced by our ancient great seers in respect of the word *Oamkār* (i.e. *Om*) which is that it is taken to be an *avyavaykṣara* (i.e. indeclinable, one syllabled particle). It is an underived and indeclinable word representing in its fullest connotation the only God. But grammar still tries to explain it by adding suffix *man* to the root *av* having the following nineteen meanings:

Protection, motion, desire, pleasure, satisfaction, attainment, entrance, hearing, owing, entreaty, action, wish, light, obtaining, embracing, killing, giving, division, and development are 19 meanings assigned to the root *av*.⁷²

These above noted nineteen meanings of the root *av* when applied to God, would denote the following sense:

1. *Rakṣaṇa* (Protection): He is the protector of all; He is the saviour.
2. *Gati* (Motion): The word *gati* has three meanings : (1) knowledge, (2) movement, and (3) attainment. God is all knowledge, He knows every thing. He is the cause of the motion of the world which always moves on Being omnipresent, He is available every-where.

3. *Kānti* (Desire): He is the ultimate desired object of all human beings. Or He fulfils all our desires, although He is Himself desireless.
4. *Priti* (Love): He is all Love and all Bliss. He is the supreme-object of the love of all.
5. *Tripati* (Satisfaction): Nothing else remains to be obtained when a person has obtained Him.
6. *Avagama* (Attainment): Souls or devotees attain salvation or desired objects through His Grace.
7. *Praveśa* (Entrance): Being the subtlest, He is the Innerself of all, or souls merge in Him in salvation.
8. *Sravaṇa* (Hearing): Devotees hear about Him but cannot see Him. He is the efficient cause of the hearing of gross, subtle and hidden sounds.
9. *Swamyartha* (To be overlord or owning): He is Self-existent and Lord of all.
10. *Yāchanā* (Entreaty): He is omnipresent and everyone approaches Him with entreaties. He is the accomplisher of all our entreaties.
11. *Kiryā* (Action): He is the origin of all actions, Creator, Preserver and Destroyer; *Kartā, Sarga, sthiti, pratyavahār, hatu*.⁷²
12. *Ichhā* (Wish): Himself free from all wishes, He fulfils and reveals auspicious wishes of devotees or of souls.
13. *Dipti* (Light): He is self-effulgent. All darkness disappears when He is seen. He is all light. "*Tasya bhāsā savamidam vibhāt(i)*".⁷⁴
14. *Avāpti* (Achievement): He is the ultimate (object of) achievement.
15. *Ālīṅgana* (Embracing): Being present everywhere and pervading all, He is metaphorically called "embracing all".
16. *Himsā* (Killings): Destroyer of ignorance or doubts.
17. *Dāna* (Giving): Bestower or giver of happiness.
18. *Bhāga* (Division) : Divider or arrayer of all parts of the Universe—the cause of division and creator of various forms in the world.

19. *Vṛddhi* (Development): He, who for the creation of the world, is the efficient cause of development, of the primordial matter into its gross form, etc.

These nineteen meanings of the root *av*, if expanded and developed in accordance with the grammatical rules, would give unlimited connotations of the mystic syllable 'Om'. In fact, the scope of the meanings of the great word is beyond human keen and unlimited.

The Symbol for *Oamkār*:

This mystic word is written in mystic form as—ॐ or ओम् containing all the principal elements of all the vowels and consonants of all the Indian scripts. How old this symbol is, cannot be said precisely. It is said that the *swāstika*, the cross and the crescent appear to have originated from it. It is for the scholars to decide about the veracity of this statement.

Concluding Remarks:

I conclude with the remarks that the *mūl mantra* is the gist of the whole sacred *bāṇī* and contains in a nutshell seeds of all the principles of the Sikh religion and the ancient Hindu culture. The phrase '*Ek Oamkār*' is the absolute essence of the whole *mūl mantra*. It is the one word *mūl mantra*. I have made an attempt to explain the limitless significance of this great word but it will always remain unexplained. Who can know the unknowable? *Ajñātam Viññātam*, i.e. He is unknown to them who know Him (*Kaṭha*).

Every mantra, according to Pāṇini, the great grammarian and philologist of ancient India, must be Preceded by the sacred syllable *Om* or *Oamkār*.⁷⁵

Manu, the Law-giver, also enjoins that a mantra should be preceded by *Oamkār*.⁷⁶

- (a) *Brahmaṇḥ praṇavam kuyati.*

Ādāvante cha sarvadā.

- (b) *Oamkār pūrvikāh.*

This procedure of the ancient sages has been accepted and the word *Oamkār* has been placed in the beginning of the mantra here. But to avoid confusion regarding other names e.g. Hari, or Rama, the figures '1' has been put before '*Oamkār*'.

NOTES

- 1 i) ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਤਜਿ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਹਉਮੈ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ॥
ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਸਦਾ ਧਿਆਇ ਤੂੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ॥ *Gurū Granth*, pp.29-30
- ii) ਏਕਮ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਕਰਉ ਬੰਦਨਾ ਧਿਆਇ॥
ਗੁਣ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੁਪਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਰਨਿ ਪਰਉ ਹਰਿਰਾਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 296
- iii) ਬਾਜੀਗਰਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਬਾਜੀ ਪਾਈ॥
ਨਾਨਾ ਰੂਪ ਭੇਖ ਦਿਖਲਾਈ॥
ਸਾਂਗੁ ਉਤਾਰਿ ਬੰਮਿਉ ਪਾਸਾਰਾ॥
ਤਬ ਏਕੋ ਏਕੰਕਾਰਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 736
- v) ਗੁਣ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਨਿਤ ਸਖੀਹੋ ਸਗਲ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਪਾਏ ਰਾਮ॥
ਸਫਲ ਜਨਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਾਧੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਧਿਆਏ ਰਾਮ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 782
- v) ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਏਕੁ ਪਾਸਾਰਾ ਏਕੈ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥
ਏਕੁ ਬਿਸਥੀਰਨੁ ਏਕੁ ਸੰਪੂਰਨੁ ਏਕੈ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਆਧਾਰਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 821
- 2 i) ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਸੋ ਜੇਵੀਐ ਜੋ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਇ॥
ਅਵਰੁ ਦੂਜਾ ਕਿਉ ਜੇਵੀਐ ਜੰਮੇ ਤੈ ਮਹਿ ਜਾਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 509
- ii) ਮੈ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਪੇਖਿਓ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਰੀ ਕੋਊ॥
ਖੰਡ ਦੀਪ ਸਭ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਰਵਿਆ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਭ ਲੋਊ॥ *Ibid.*, pp. 534-35
- iii) ਓਹੁ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 759
- iv) ਗਹਿਰ ਗਭੀਰੁ ਅਥਾਹੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ ਅਗਣਤੁ ਤੂੰ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 966
- v) ਏਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਏਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਸਭ ਏਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਉਤਪਤਿ ਚਲੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1334
- vi) ਏਕੋ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਭ ਠਾਈ॥
ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਪੂਜ ਚੜਾਈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1345
- 3 इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुर्दियो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान् ।।
एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ।।
Rig Veda, 1.16.6
- 4 तदेवाग्निस्तदादित्यस्तद् वायुस्तद् चन्द्रमा ।
तदेव शुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म तदापः स प्रजापतिः ।।
Yajur Veda, 32.3
- 5 एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा एकं रूपं बहुधा य करोति ।

तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ।।

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- 6 नित्यो नित्यानां यो चेतनं चेतनानाम्,
एको बहूनां यो विदधाति कामान् ।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरा;
तेषां शान्तिः शाश्वती नेतरेषाम् ।।

Ibid.

- 7 (a) सुन सखि पिਤ ਸਹਿ ਜਿਤਿ ਬਸੈ
ਜਿਤਿ ਸਹਿ ਬਸੈ ਕਿ ਧਿਯੁ ॥
(b) ਖਾਲਿਕ ਖਲਕ ਖਲਕ ਮੈਂ ਖਾਲਿਕ
ਸਭ ਘਟ ਰਹਯਾ ਸਮਾਝੁ ॥

Kabir Granthāvali, p. 10

Ibid

- 8 ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ॥
9 ਢਵੈ ਢਾਹਿ ਉਸਾਰੈ ਆਪੇ ਜਿਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਿਵੈ ਕਰੇ॥
ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਚਲਾਏ ਤਿਸੁ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੈ ਜਾ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ॥

Gurū Granth p. 1

Ibid., p. 433

- 10 ਆਪੀਨ੍ਹੇ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿ ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਣਿਆ॥
ਅੰਬਰੁ ਧਰਤਿ ਵਿਛੋੜਿ ਚੰਦੋਆ ਤਾਣਿਆ॥
ਵਿਣੁ ਥੰਮ੍ਹਾ ਗਗਨੁ ਰਹਾਇ ਸਬਦੁ ਨੀਸਾਣਿਆ॥
ਕੀਏ ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਨੰਤੁ ਚੋਜਿ ਵਿਡਾਣਿਆ॥
ਸਚੈ ਤਖਤਿ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ਹੋਰ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣਿਆ॥

Ibid., p. 1279

- 11 ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਭੇ ਧੂਪਜਹਿ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਹਿ॥
ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਲੈ ਵਸਿ ਹੈ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਾਰਿ ਸਮਾਹਿ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਥੀਐ ਇਨਾ ਜੰਤਾ ਵਸਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਾਹਿ॥

Ibid., p. 55

- 12 ਪੁਣਵੇ ਆਦਿ ਏਕੰਕਾਰਾ॥
ਜਲ ਬਲ ਮਹੀਅਲ ਕੀਓ ਪਸਾਰਾ॥
ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਅਬਗਤ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ॥
ਲੋਕ ਚੱਤੁ ਦਸ ਜੋਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸੀ॥

Dasam Granth, p. 11

- 13 ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ॥
ਤਿਸਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰਿਆਉ॥
ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਵਣ ਕਹਾ ਵੀਚਾਰ॥
ਵਾਰਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਵਾ ਏਕ ਵਾਰ॥
ਜੋ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸਾਈ ਭਲੀ ਕਾਰ॥
ਤੂੰ ਸਦਾ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ॥

Gurū Granth, p. 3.

- 14 ਏਕ ਮਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਰਬ ਮਹਿ ਏਕਾ ਏਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦੇਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਈ॥

Ibid., p. 907

- 15 अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ।

- मत्तः परतरं नान्यत् किञ्चिदस्ति धनंजय ।।
 मयि सर्वसिद्धिप्रोक्तं सूत्रं मणिगणा इव । *Bhagavad Gītā*, 7, 6-7
- 16 वासुदेवः सर्वमिति । *Ibid.*, 7, 19; *Rig Veda*, X. 90,2
- 17 ਵੰਵੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਜਾ ਦੇਖਾ ਦੂਜਾ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਹੀ॥
 ਏਕੋ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਬ ਥਾਈ ਏਕੁ ਵਸਿਆ ਮਨ ਮਾਹੀ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 433
- 18 ਜਿਨਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਾਜੀ ਤਿਨਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਗੋਈ॥
 ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਦੂਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 355
- 19 एकं सदिक्प्रा बहूधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः । *Rig Veda*, p. 1, 16.6
- 20 तुलसी मस्तकं तब निर्वो जब धनुष बाण हो हाथ ।।
- 21 ਏਕੋ ਸਿਮਰਿਐ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜੋ ਜਲ ਬਲ ਮਹਿ ਸਮਾਇ॥
 ਦੂਜਾ ਕਾਹਿ ਸਿਮਰਿਏ ਜੋ ਜੰਮੇ ਤੇ ਮਰ ਜਾਇ॥
- 22 ਨਾਨਕ ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਥੀਐ ਇਨਾ ਜੰਤਾ ਵਸਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਾਹਿ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 55
- 23 ਏਕ ਸਿਵ ਭਏ ਏਕ ਗਏ ਏਕ ਫੇਰ ਭਏ ਰਾਮਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਕੈ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਭੀ ਅਨੇਕ ਹੈ॥
 ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਅਰੁ ਬਿਸਨ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਐ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਕੇਤੇ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਮੂਹਨ ਕੈ ਹੁਇ ਹੁਇ ਬਿਤਏ ਹੈ॥
 ਮੋਨਦੀ ਮਦਾਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਅਸੁਨੀ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਅੰਸ ਅਵਿਤਾਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਬਸ ਭਏ ਹੈ॥
 ਪੀਰ ਐ ਪਿਕਾਬਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਗਨੇ ਨ ਪਰਤ ਏਤੇ ਭੂਮ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਹੁਇਕੈ ਫੇਰਿ ਭੂਮ ਹੀ ਮਿਲਏ ਹੈ॥
Dasam Granth, p. 18
- 24 ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ॥
 ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 1035
- 25 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਅੰਨਾ ਤੁਰਕੁ ਕਾਣਾ॥
 ਦੂਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਸਿਆਣਾ॥
 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਪੂਜੈ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਮਸੀਤਿ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 875
- 26 न दिक्तीयो न तृतीयश्चतुर्थो नाप्युच्यते ।
 न पंचमो न षष्ठः सप्तमो नाप्युच्यते ।
 नाष्टमो न नवमो दशमो नाप्युच्यते ।
 स सर्वस्मै चै पश्यति यच्च प्राणति यच्च न ।
 तसिदं निगतं सहः स एष एक वृद्धेक एव ।। *Atharva Veda*, XII. 16.18
- 27 *Rig Veda*, 1. 16.6.
- 28 ਆਪੇ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਆਪੇ ਪਰਗਟੀਐ॥
 ਕੀਮਤਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਨ ਪਾਇ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਟੀਐ॥
 ਗਹਿਰ ਗਭੀਰੁ ਅਥਾਹੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ ਅਗਣਤੁ ਝੁੰ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਵਰਤੈ ਇਕੁ ਇਕੋ ਇਕੁ ਝੁੰ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 966
- 29 ओंकारः=ओम् इति रवः क्रियते यस्याच्चारणेन सर्वर्ण-विशेष *p. 242*

- 30 तस्य गद्यकः प्रणवः *Pātāñjal Yoga Darshana*, 1.27
- 31 *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, p. 185
- 32 ॐ सतिनामु *Gurū Granth*, p. 1
- 33 मेरे मन तजि निंदा हउमै अहंकार॥
हरि जीउि सदा पਿਆਇ ਤੂ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ॥ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30
- 34 ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਪੂਰੀਆ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਸਿਰਜਨਹਾਰੁ॥
ਅਨਿਕ ਭੌਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਪਸਰਿਆ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ॥
ਏਕਮ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਕਰਉ ਬੰਦਨਾ ਪਿਆਇ॥
ਗੁਣ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੁਪਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਰਨਿ ਪਰਉ ਹਰਿਰਾਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 296
- 35 ਬਾਜੀਗਰਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਬਾਜੀ ਪਾਈ॥ਨਾਨਾ ਰੂਪ ਭੇਖ ਦਿਖਲਾਈ॥
ਸਾਂਗੁ ਉਤਾਰਿ ਬੰਮਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰਾ॥ ਤਬ ਏਕੋ ਏਕੰਕਾਰਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 736
- 36 ਗੁਣ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਨਿਤ ਸਖੀਹੋ ਸਗਲ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਪਾਏ ਰਾਮ॥
ਸਫਲ ਜਨਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਾਧੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਪਿਆਏ ਰਾਮ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 782
- 37 ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਏਕੁ ਪਾਸਾਰਾ ਏਕੈ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥
ਏਕ ਬਿਸਥੀਰਨੁ ਏਕੁ ਸੰਪੂਰਨੁ ਏਕੈ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਅਧਾਰਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 821
- 38 ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਉਤਪਤਿ॥ ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਕੀਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ॥
ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸੈਲ ਜਗ ਭਏ॥ ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਬੇਦ ਨਿਰਮਣੈ॥
ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਉਧਰੇ॥ ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਤਰੇ॥
ਓਨਮ ਅਖਰ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ॥ ਓਨਮ ਅਖਰੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਸਾਰੁ॥ *Ibid.*, pp. 929-30
- 39 ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਉਤਪਾਤੀ॥ ਕੀਆ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਸਭ ਰਾਤੀ॥
ਵਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ॥ ਚਾਰਿ ਬੇਦ ਚਾਰੇ ਖਾਣੀ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1003
- 40 ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸਭ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਪਾਈ॥ ਸਭੁ ਖੋਲੁ ਤਮਾਸਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ॥
ਆਪੇ ਵੇਕ ਕਰੇ ਸਭਿ ਸਾਰਾ ਆਪੇ ਭੰਨਿ ਘੜਾਇਦਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1061
- 41 ਜੇ ਤਉ ਬਚਨੁ ਦੀਓ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਤਉ ਮੈ ਸਾਜ ਸੀਗਰਿਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p.1213
- 42 *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, pp. 360-61
- 43 ओमित्येद क्षरमुद गीथमुपासीत् । *Chhāndogyaopaniṣad*, 1.1
- 44 ओमित्येतदक्षरम् 'इदं सर्वं तस्योपव्याख्यानम् । *Ibid*
- 45 सर्वं वेदा यत्पदमामनन्ति तपांसि सर्वाणि च यद् वदन्ति ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीष्योमित्येतत् ।। *Kaṭhapaniṣad* 1.15
- 46 एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं परम् ।
एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत् । *Ibid.*, 16
- 47 ओंकार रूपो भगवान् यो वेदादौ प्रतिष्ठितः ।
यं सदा मुनयो देवाः स्मरन्तीन्द्रादयो ह्रदि ।। *Gaṇeś Purāṇa*, 1.11

- 48 ਔਂਕਾਰ—ਸ੍ਯੋ ਭਗਵਾਨ੍ ਭਕਤਸ੍ਤੁ ਗਣਨਾਯਕ: ।
 यथा सर्वेषु वेदेषु पूज्यते यो विनायकः । *Ibid.*, 2. 11
- 49 ਅਥੈਕਸ੍ਯੈਵਾਕਸ਼ਰਸ੍ਯ ਰਸੰ (ਪ੍ਰਜਾਪਤਿ:) ਨਾਸ਼ਨਕੋਦਾਦਾਤਮ੍,
 ओमित्येतस्मै वा सेयं वागमवत् । ओमेव नामैषा”
 तदेतदक्षरं (ओंकार) ब्रह्मणो यं कायम्, इत्यादि ।
- 50 ਪਿਤਾਮਹਸ੍ਯ ਜਗਤੋ ਮਾਤਾ ਧਾਤਾ ਪਿਤਾਮਹ:
 वेद्यं पवित्रमोंकार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ।। *Bhagavad Gītā*, IX. 17
- 51 ਔਮਿਤ੍ਯੇਕਾਕਸ਼ਰੰ ਬ੍ਰਹ੍ਮ । *Ibid.*, VIII. 13
- 52 ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਏਕੁ ਪਾਸਾਰਾ ਏਕੈ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥
 એકુ ਬਿਸਬੀਰਨુ એકੁ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਏਕੈ ਪੂਨ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 821
- 53 ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਰਗੁਣ ਰੂਪ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਲਈ ਓਅੰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਅਗੇ ਹੀ ਪੁਰਲਭ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਇਹ ਵਾਧਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ‘ਓਅੰ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ‘ਓਅੰਕਾਰ’ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ; ਅਤੇ ਇਸਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਏਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ “ਉਹ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਹੋਂਦਾ ਰਹੇ।”
Satigur Nānak Dev Di Bāṇi Jap(u)ji Sāhib Dā Tikā, p. 37
- 54 (i) ਔਂਕਾਰ ਏਵੇਦੰ ਸਰਵੰ *Chhāndogyopaniṣad*, III, 12, 1
 (ii) ਸਰਵਮਾਂਕਾਰ ਏਵ *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad*, 1
 (iii) ਔਮਿਤੀਦੰ ਸਰਵੰ *Taittiriyaopaniṣad*, 1, 8, 1
- 55 तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति—उपनिषद्
- 56 (a) तेजो हिरण्यम् *Taittiriya*, III, 12, 5. 12
 (b) ज्योतिर्हिरण्यम् *Gopatha* I, 2. 21
- 57 ਔਮਿਤ੍ਯੇਤਦਕਸ਼ਰਮਿਦੰ ਸਰਵੰ ਤਸ੍ਯੋਪਵ੍ਯਾਖ੍ਯਾਨੰ ਭੂਤੰ ਭਵਦਮਵਿਐਤਿਤਿ ਸਰਵਮੋਡਕਾਰ
 एवं यवचान्यत त्रिकायातीतं तदप्योਡकार एव *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad*, 1.1
- 58 ਜਾਗਰਿਤ ਸਥਾਨੋ ਬਹਿਐਭਾਜਾ ਸਪਤਾਂਡਗ ਏਕੋਨਵਿੰਸ਼ਤਿਮੁਖ: ਸ੍ਥੂਲੋਭੁਗ੍ ਵੈਸ਼ਵਾਨਰ:
 प्रथमः पादः ।। *Ibid.*, 3, 11
- 59 ਸਰਵੰ ਹਯੇਤਦ੍ ਬ੍ਰਹ੍ਮ ਸੋ ਯਮਾਤ੍ਮਾ ਚਤੁਸ਼ਪਾਤ੍ । *Ibid.*, 1.2
- 60 तस्य ह वा एतस्यात्मनो वैश्वानरस्य मूर्ध्वं सुतेजाश्चक्षुर्विश्वस्मः प्राण पृथग्बर्त्तात्मा ।
Chhāndogyopaniṣad V. 18, 2
- 61 स्वप्रस्थनो अन्तः प्रज्ञः सपताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः प्रविविक्त भुक् तैजसो द्वितीयः सम्वादः ।
Ibid
- 62 यत्र सुप्तो न कन्दन क्रामं काम्यते, न कन्दनस्वपनं पश्यति तत्सुषुप्तम् । सुषुप्तस्थाने एकी भूतः प्रज्ञानघन एवानन्दमयो हयानन्द भुक् चेतो मुखः प्राज्ञस्तृतीय ।
Ibid., II, 5, 11
- 63 ਏਥ ਸਰਵੇਸ਼ਵਰ ਏਥ ਸਰਵੰਭਾ ਏਥੋ ਅਨ੍ਤਰ੍ਯਾਮੀ ।
 एष योनिः सर्वस्य प्रभवाप्ययौ हि भूतानाम् । *Ibid.*, II, 6, 11

- 64 नान्तः प्रज्ञेन बहिष्कृतं नोभयतः प्रज्ञं न प्रज्ञानघनं न प्रज्ञं, नाप्रज्ञम् ना प्रज्ञाम् अदृष्टमव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यम
लक्षणमभित्यक्तम् व्यपदेश्यमेकान्तम् प्रत्ययसारं प्रपञ्चोपशमं शान्तं शिवमद्वैतं मन्यन्ते स आत्मा स विज्ञेयः ।

Ibid., II, 7, 11

- 65 ਤੂ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਾਂਹੀ ਸਿਰੀ ਕਾਲਾ॥ ਤੂ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅਲੇਖ ਅਗੰਮ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ।
ਸਤ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਅਤਿ ਸੀਤਲੁ ਸਹਜ ਭਾਇ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇਆ॥
ਤੂੰ ਵਰਤਾਇ ਚਉਥੈ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸਾ। ਕਾਲ ਬਿਕਾਲ ਕੀਏ ਇਕ ਗ੍ਰਾਸਾ॥
ਨਿਰਮਲ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਜਗਜੀਵਨੁ ਗੁਰਿ ਅਨਹਦ ਸਬਦਿ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 1038

- 66 ਜਿਨ ਚਾਖਿਆ ਸੇਈ ਸਾਦੁ ਜਾਣਨਿ ਜਿਉ ਗੁੰਗੇ ਮਿਠਿਆਈ।
ਅਕਬੈ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਬੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਚਾਲਉ ਸਦਾ ਰਜਾਈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 635

- 67 सो यमात्मा ध्यक्षर मोङ् कारो धि मात्रं पादाः मात्राः
मात्राश्च पादा अकार उकार मकार इति ।

- 68 जागरितस्थानो वैश्वानरो कारः प्रथमा मात्रा आप्तैः आदिमत्वात् वा आप्नोति ह वै सवन्ति कामान् आदिश्च
भवति य एवं वेद ।।

- 69 स्वप्न स्थानः तैजस उकारो दिवतीयमात्रा, उत्कषति उभयत्वाद्वा

Aitareya Āraṇyaka, II. 3.73

- 70 सुषुप्तस्थानः प्राज्ञः, मकार स्तुतीया मात्रा, मितेः अपीतेः वा

- 71 अभावश्चतुर्थो व्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशमः शिवो द्वैत एवमोङ्कार आत्मैव ।

- 72 अतः रक्षण, गति, कान्ति प्रीति, तृप्ति, अवगम, प्रवेश, श्रवण,
स्वाम्यर्थ (समार्थ्य), याचन, क्रिया, इच्छा दीप्ति, अवाप्ति, आलिंगन,
हिंसा, दान, भाग, वृद्धिषु (600 धातु पाठे) ।

- 73 सर्ग, स्थिति, प्रत्यवहार, हतुः

- 74 तस्य भासा सर्वं मिदं विभाति

- 75 ओममभ्यादाते, *Aṣṭādhyāi*, VIII, 2.87

- 76 (a) ब्रह्मणः प्रणवं कुर्यति

आदावन्ते च सर्वदा ।

Man Smṛiti, II, 74

- (b) ओंकार पूर्विकाः

Ibid., II, 81

SAT(I) NĀM(U)

Ram Singh

The expression *sat(i) nām(u)* is a compound of two terms; '*sat(i)*' and '*nām(u)*'. The problem of relating the two has exercised the minds of almost all commentators of the *Jap(u)*. They may be grouped into three classes :

1. Those who, consider '*sat(i)*' as an attribute of *nām(u)* and render *sat(i) nām(u)* into English in a phrase like: "of the true name" they lay emphasis on '*nām(u)*'.

2. Those who give more prominence to '*sat(i)*' than to '*nām(u)*' and translate *sat(i) nām(u)* as: "His name is Truth".

3. Those who lay equal emphasis on '*sat(i)*' and '*nām(u)*' and keep them apart as two distinct terms, no-one qualifying the other; they translate '*sat(i) nām(u)*' as "Truth and Name."

But in whatever way we may relate the two terms, in each case, the two vocables have to be explicated.

Apart, from the problem of relating the two terms of '*sat(i) nām(u)*' to each other, another problem of relating them conjointly or severally to the expression '*Ekoamkār*' (ॐ), (in the *Mūl Mantra* that precedes them) or to '*kartā purakh(u)*' that follows them has also been discussed. We shall glance at two interesting examples:

1. Dr. Ernest Trumpp relates '*sat(i) nām(u)*' to '*karatā*' though not to '*karatā purakh(u)*'. His rendering of '*Ekoamkār sat(i) nām(u) karatā purakh(u)*' is as follows:

One God, the true name is the creator, the spirit without fear.¹

2. Prof. Sant Singh Sekhon relates '*sat(i) nām(u)*' to '*Ekoamkār*' thus:

thus, He, the Name and Om are one and the same thing. Indeed,

according to the Upanishads, *Om* is the sole absolute Name of the godhead. In this way (ॐ) of the *Mūl Mantra* is, in fact, itself the *sat(i) nām(u)* or Real Name. All other names of the Godhead are derived or *kirtam* names.²

The reference here of 'derived or *kirtam* names' is to the following lines of Guru Arjan, which Prof. Sekhon quotes and translates as follows:

*Kirtam nām kathe tere jīhabā. Sat(i) nām(u) terā parā pūrābalā.*³

The tongue mentions Thy derived names. Thy real name is even prior to the beginning.⁴

It may be noted here that Prof. Sekhon regards '*sat(i)*' as the attribute of '*nām(u)*'. His emphasis is on '*nām(u)*' which he equates with (ॐ). Like many other commentators, he does not make '*Ek*' as distinct from '*Oamkār*' or '*Om*'. When he says that it is the sole absolute name of the God-head, he evidently implies *Ekoamkār* that has reference to absolute God or to *nirguṇa* Brahman.

Sardar Sohan Singh also interprets '*nām(u)*' in a way which approximates it to the Absolute:

In Indian philosophy, each individual name is a conjunct of *nām* and *rūp*, i.e. Name and Form. But a Universal Being cannot be identified with any particular form and hence, He is simply the Name i.e. the spirit.⁵

Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia relates '*sat(i) nām(u)*' not to the indeterminate Being, but to its determinate character.

So Ramanuja's concept of the Real as a determinate whole leads to some logical difficulties and contradictions. To get out of this situation, one has to go to Hegel or to look to some other solution of the problem—the problem of treating the Absolute as having some sort of determinate character making possible its determinate relatedness without which the reality of the determinate being becomes illusory as it did in the hands of Shankara. Herein lies the significance of the "Creation" used by Guru Nanak as a relation which, while keeping intact the transcendental indeterminateness

of the Being itself, in itself, in its aseity (ੴ), invests it with a determinate character, *sat(i)nām(u)* (ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ) thus making possible its determinate relation, *kartā* (ਕਰਤਾ), with the empirical reality.⁶

It is evident that Dr. Ahluwalia gives to '*sat(i) nām(u)*' a place midway between Being and empirical reality. It is neither equated with non-phenomenal *nirguṇa* Brahman nor with the phenomenal *saguṇa* Brahman. It stands in between the two. This three-tier description of Brahman or the two-tier formulation of the problem of creation, direct from *nirguṇa* Brahman to *saguṇa* Brahman is popular in our country and among the Sikhs too, yet the tradition of a three-tier solution is also quite strong. In this tradition Brahman is designated in three ways: (i) *nirguṇa nirāṅkāṛ*, (ii) *saguṇa nirāṅkāṛ* (iii) *saguṇa sāṅkāṛ*. In *gurbāṇī* we come across a few verses which may be so interpreted as to point towards the middle state of Brahman:

*Ighai nirgun ūghai sargun kel karat bich(i) suāmi merā.*⁷

Jahā bol tah achhar āvā. Jah abol tah man(u) na rahāwā.

*Bol abol madh(i) hai soī. Jas uhu hai tas lakhai na koī.*⁸

In the context of our problem of explicating *nām(u)*, lines such as these are very helpful. Guru Nanak provides us two more relevant lines in *Āsā dī Vār*:

Āpīnai āp(u) sājio āpīnai rachio nāu.

*Duyī kudrat(i) sājīai kar(i) āsaṅ(u) dītho chāu.*⁹

Here the phrase *āpīnai āp(u) sājio* refers to self-created *nirguṇa*, *nirāṅkāṛ* and *duyī kudrat(i)* to the phenomenal creation. In between the two, comes *āpīnai rachio nāu*. This *nāu* is different from and at higher level than *kudrat(i)* or *saguṇa sāṅkāṛ*. I suggest that we relate this *nāu* to *saguṇa nirāṅkāṛ*. Guru Nanak has perhaps done the same in these lines of *Jap(u)*.

Sach khaṇḍ(i) vai nirāṅkāṛ(u).

*Kar(i) kar(i) vekhai nadar(i) nihāl.*¹⁰

Although the expression *nāu* or *nām(u)* does not occur here, yet the creative agency is called *nirāṅkāṛ*. Putting the lines from *Āsā dī Vār* and the *Jap(u)* in juxtaposition, we may consider *nirāṅkāṛ(u)* of

Jap(u) as equivalent to the *nāu* of *Āsā dī Vār* because both have been assigned the same creative role by Guru Nanak. *Nirañkār* of *Jap(u)* cannot mean *nirguṇa nirañkār* because *nirguṇa* cannot create.

In addition to associating *nām(u)* with *nirañkār(u)*, we may also link it to *sach* of *sach khaṇḍ*. In the following lines of the *Jap(u)*, the creative agency is also related to *sach(u)*.

Soi soi sadā sach(u) sāhib(u) sāchā sāchī nāī

*Hai bhī hosī jāi na jāsī rachanā jin(i) rachāī*¹¹

The true Master or *sach(u) sāhib(u)* of these lines, being the creative energy of the world, is not different from the *nirañkār* of *sach khaṇḍ*, and therefore from *nāu* of *Āsā dī Vār*. By thus associating *nām(u)*, with *sach(u)* also, the equivalence of *sach(u) sāhib(u)*, *nirañkār(u)* and *sat(i) nām(u)* may be suggested.

We need not always link '*nām(u)*' with the divine creative power indirectly. Its direct link with this power is also made in *gurbāṇī* :

(a) *Nām ke dhāre sagale jañt.*

Nām ke dhāre khaṇḍ brahmaṇḍ.

Nām ke dhāre āgās pātāl.

Nām ke dhāre sagal ākār.

Nām ke dhāre puriā sabh bhawan.

*Nam ke saṅg(i) udhare sun(i) sravan.*¹²

(b) *Jetā kitā tetā nāu.*

*Viṇ(u) nāvai nāhī ko thāu.*¹³

In *gurbāṇī* another term *sabad(u)* bears almost the same meaning as *nām(u)*¹⁴ and is also used to mean the same creative power:

(a) *Utpat(i) parlau sabade hovai.*

*Sabade hī phir(i) opat(i) hovai.*¹⁵

(b) *Eko sabad(u) eko prabh(u) varatai sabh ekas(u) te utipat(i) chalai.*¹⁶

Jin(i) jag(u) sirj(i) samāiā so sāhib(u) kudrat(i) jāṇovā.

Sacharā dūr(i) na bhāliai ghaṭ(i) ghaṭ(i) sabad(u) pachhāṇovā.

*Sach(u) sabad(u) pachhaṇah(u) dūr(i) na jaṇah(u) jin(i) eh rachanā rāchī.*¹⁷

This use of the term *sabad* is a little extraordinary. Usually, *sabad* is used to denote *gursabad* in *gurbāṇī*. In that sense, its function is to provide enlightenment to the disciple of a guru. This function seems quite different from the creative role of '*sabad*'. How can the words spoken or written by a guru on earth, be the instrument of creating that earth or the entire universe? Not only the term *sabad*, but the term guru also is sometimes used to denote the existence of a being much higher or greater than gurus in human form:

- (a) *Ād(i) gurae namah. Jugād(i) gurae namah.*
*Sat(i) gurae namah. Srī gurdevae namah.*¹⁸
- (b) *Gurdev mātā gurdev pitā gurdev suāmī pamesurā.*

... ..

Gurdev kartā sabh(i) pāp hartā gurdev patit pavit karā.

Gurdev ād(i) jugād(i) jug(u) jug(u) gurdev manṭ(u) har(i) jap(u) udharā.

*Gurdev satigur(u) pārbraham(u) paramesar(u) gurdev Nānak har(i) namaskarā.*¹⁹

Where does this lofty guru reside? How can man find him? Surely, he is not a human being who has reached spiritual perfection. A holy person, who has successfully completed his spiritual journey, may be said to have become one with God, or in Sikh parlance, to have earned a presence in the Divine Court of '*sach khaṇḍ*', but even he cannot perform the function of '*nirāṅkār*' and create worlds. Dr. S. Radha Krishnanan writes:

Badaryana, after stating that the almost infinite power and knowledge which will come to the liberated soul after the attainment of release, makes the observation, that, nevertheless, none will get the power of creating, ruling and destroying the universe, since that power belongs to God alone. This is consistent with the view of Madhava, who admits that it is impossible for the subordinate souls to acquire the infinite power and independence of God.²⁰

Most of the Sikh scholars insist that God never assumes human form and man cannot share all the attributes, especially, the creative power, of God, But S. Sohan Singh finds some doubts arising in his mind about the latter doctrine, when he is confronted with the problem of reconciling the experience of the aspirant in '*karam khaṇḍ*' and '*sach khaṇḍ*' of the *Jap(u)*.²¹

This stanza (37) covers two regions. The region of Truth has been appended to it instead of being given a separate one, because, in the first place, it grows naturally out of the Region of Grace, but secondly, and more so, because it is not possible to give a clear description of it, except to say that in some way or the other it is concerned with the cosmic order. Perhaps, the teacher wishes to convey the idea that a man may travel so far in the Region of Grace that he may even be said to participate in the cosmic order—perhaps.²²

S. Sohan Singh is not firm in his mind about his interpretation of *sach khaṇḍ*, but we firmly reject his views. Interestingly, however, similar doubts begin to assail our minds also, when we find Bhai Gurdas, the most authentic interpreter of *gurbāṇī*, associating the power to create worlds, with not only the Guru in the abstract, but historical Gurus also :

(a) *Niraṅkār(u) Nānak deu niraṅkār(i) ākār baṇāiā*.²³

(b) *Gurū Arjaṇ(u) sach(u) sirjaṇhārā*.²⁴

(c) *Harkhah(u) sogah(u) bāharā haraṇ
bharāṇ samarath(u) sarāṇḍā*.

... ..

Gur govind(u) govind(u) gur(u)

Har(i) govind(u) sadā vigaṇḍā.²⁵

(d) *Oaṁkār akār jis(u) sat(i) gur(u)
purakh(u) sirāṇḍā soi*.²⁶

(e) *Sat(i) gur kartā purakh(u) hai*.²⁷

In the last stanza of his first vār, Bhai Gurdas says that Sikhs of Guru Hargobind asked him about the number of 'gurus' still to appear after the sixth. The reply that the Guru gave is very extraordinary :

*Dalbhanjan gur(u) sūramā vad jodhā bahu parupkārī.
Puchhan(i) sikh ardās(i) kar(i) chhia mahilān tak(i) daras(u)
nihārī.*

*Agam agochar satigurū bole mukh te suṇah(u) saṁsārī.
Kal(i)jug(i) pīrī soḍhiān nihchal niv usār(i) khalārī.
Jug(i) jug(i) sat(i)gur dhare avtārī.²⁸*

The word '*avatār*' is very suspect in Sikh eyes, but the phrase *dhare avtārī* here means simply 'will take birth'. The literal meaning of the last verse which tells us that the line of Sikh gurus of the Sodhi caste will continue age after age is beyond our comprehension. These lines, therefore, should be interpreted symbolically. The *sat(i) gur(u)* whom 'Guru Hargobind is made here to describe as taking birth in every age must be an entity different from both, Almighty God and human gurus. God cannot be said to take birth and human gurus cannot form a line running through all ages. Moreover, why does Bhai Gurdas describe Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan and Guru Hargobind as *Karatā purakh(u) sirjaṅhārā, saraṁdā*, etc? If we do not wish to take objection to these attributes being used here, our concept of these historical names must undergo a radical change. Bhai Gurdas perhaps, does not mean historical *gurus* by these names, but that other type of '*sat(i) gur(u)*' to whom he refers above. That '*sat(i) gur(u)*' is a perennial guru not a guru appearing and passing away in time.

Students of Patanjali Yoga are familiar with the concept of '*Puruṣa Viśeṣa*', also called '*Īśvara*'. Mircea Eliade makes this comment upon him.

All in all, *Īśvara* is only an archetype of the Yogin—a microyogin, very probably a patron of certain Yogic sects. At least Patanjali says that *Īśvara* was the Guru of the sages of immemorial times, for, he adds, *Īśvara* is not bound by time.²⁹

Īśvara, that 'is not bound by time' does not belong to the earth. This immortal *Īśvara* was recognised as their Guru by 'sages of immemorial times.' How did this concept take its origin? One answer that suggests itself is that those sages came to know of *Īśvara* in their mystical experiences. Notions similar to this occur with such great

frequency in almost all great religions of the world that *Īśvara* seems to be a necessity for the mystical consciousness. In the *Īśvara* concept of Patanjal Yoga, we get a faint glimmer of the perennial Guru described by Bhai Gurdas, This is not to say that the two concepts are one and the same, but there are some common elements. Both are called, Guru. According to Sankhya, all the several *puruṣas* in existence are embodied by their proximity to *prakṛti*, but one remains independent. He serves as a model for others in their efforts towards emancipation. In this sense, he also deserves the epithet 'Guru'. But this unique immortal entity does not possess the attribute of a creator. This Sankhya Yoga concept of *Īśvara* differs in some respects from the *Īśvara* of Vedanta, but the latter also is regarded as an inner guide of man,³⁰ and hence a sort of Guru.

Bhai Gurdas laid great stress on the principle that the six Gurus, whom he knew, possessed the same spiritual light which passed from the body of the first into that of the second and so upto the last.³¹ Now what does this light symbolize? By understanding the precise import of this symbol we may be able to make the concept of the perennial Guru a little clearer. A concept very similar to this light symbol was current amongst Sufi Islam, before the time of Bhai Gurdas. It was called *Nūr-i-Muhammadiyya* or *Haqiqatul-Muhammadiyya*. J.A. Subhan describes it in these words:

Thus Muhammad is regarded by the Sufis as the final and complete revelation of God but not only so, he is believed to have existed before the creation of the world. From this, it will be apparent that the place of the *Haqiqatul-Muhammadiyya* in the Sufi cosmogony is the same as that of the Logos in Christianity. The pre-existence of Mohammad is described in words which strongly remind us of the statements in the Gospel concerning the Logos, viz. 'All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made.' (St. John 1:3)

Tradition puts in the mouth of Muhammad, sayings, such as the following:

"The first thing which God created was the light of prophet."

"I was a prophet while Adam was between water and clay."

"I am the light of God. All things are from light."³²

In *Āsā dī Vār* Guru Nanak speaks of '*nām*' as the first entity created by God. This '*nām*' corresponds to the Sufi concept of light described in the words, "The first thing which God created was the light of the Prophet." If we substitute here 'light of Guru Nanak' for 'light of the Prophet', the Sufi concept and the concept of perennial Guru of Bhai Gurdas approximate each other. So there are two prophets and two Gurus. One prophet exists perennially in heaven and the other prophet appeared in Arabia in history. Similarly, there is one eternal Guru Nanak and another historical Guru Nanak. Sufis assign the attributes of light and creation to eternal Muhammad, Bhai Gurdas does likewise to eternal Guru Nanak.

This concept of eternal Guru is a fact of mystical experience and helps us greatly in explicating '*sat(i) nām(u)*'. I have deliberately adopted the method of comparative mysticism in my exposition. It is my firm view that best approach to an understanding of the *Mūl Mantra* is to look at it in the light of the spiritual experience underlying it. Guru Nanak composed this piece of prose on the basis of his own *anubhava*. If we call it philosophical, it is so in the sense of Indian meaning of *darsana*, not in the Western sense of speculative activity. Logos is more related to western mysticism than to its philosophy, as we shall soon see.

The Logos doctrine has a long history behind it, but basically it refers to the notion of the first creation. In its Greek form, Logos, denotes, either reason or one of the expressions of reason in words or things. ... In its most important sense in philosophy, it refers to a cosmic reason which gives order and intelligibility to the world. In this sense the doctrine first appears in Heraclitus, who affirms the reality of a Logos analogous to reason in man that regulates all physical processes and is the source of all human law.³³

In Philo of Alexandria, in whom Hebrew modes of thought mingled with Greek concepts, the Logos became the immaterial, and even at times the personal agency, through which the creative energy of the transcendent God is exerted upon the world.³⁴

But whereas in Greek philosophy, the word means divine Reason regarded as immanent in the cosmic process, the authors of the Septuagint use it to translate the Hebrew Memra and its poetic synonyms, which mean the spoken word of Deity.³⁵

Logos as 'spoken word of the Deity' reminds us of 'Om' of Hindu mysticism and 'Oanikār' of Sikhs' mysticism. After looking at the Greek and Jewish concepts of Logos, let us have a glance at its Christian counterpart, in which a new dimension is added and which is more relevant for our discussion of the perennial Guru:

In Clement of Alexandria, the Logos doctrine is a doctrine of immanence. The world is an organic whole, moving on to some exalted destiny, in harmony with the divine order. Humanity has its life and being in Christ. The Incarnation is no abrupt break in the continuing man's moral history. Christ was in the world before he came in the flesh and was preparing the world for his visible advent. Hence the prophesies of the Incarnation enter into the organic process of human history. The history of man's redemption is, for Clement, the education of the human race under its divine 'Instructor'. As Instructor the Logos has always been present in the world. He spoke through Moses and through Greek Philosophy. He even gave the sun and the moon to be worshipped, that man might rise from lower worship to the higher³⁶

It is clear from the above that the idea of Logos resembles the Indian notion of '*Puruṣa Purāṭan*'. In fact, He is the common denominator of all prophets and other religious luminaries that appeared in history from time to time. The *sat(i) gur(u)* in whose appearance in succeeding ages Guru Hargobind is reported to have expressed his belief, is not much different from Logos, Let us look at Him as He is experienced by mystics. Taking a cue from the Christian description we may say that He appears to mystics as a very compassionate Being, who, from the very beginning is concerned with salvation of the world. As soon as He creates the world, He at the same time, makes plans for its progressive emancipation. This reminds us again of Guru Nanak's concept of *nirāṅkār* in *sach khaṇḍ*:

Sach khaṇḍ(i) vasai nirāṅkār(u).
Kar(i) kar(i) vekhai nadar(i) nihāl.³⁷

Nirāṅkār's emancipatory activity flows out of His over-flowing compassion. If we take His compassion one step back, His creative activity will also appear to be the result of His compassion. The line "*dhaul dharam(u) daiā kā pūt(u)*"³⁸ seems to allude to this. '*Dharam*' as Universal Law, is the principle of creation, but it came into existence from its source of '*daiā*'. In *Mūl Mantra* the expression *gurprasād(i)* indicates this compassionate nature of Logos, as also his role as a guide and emancipator of creation.

I think Sikh mystics, when they utter the words *wāhigurū* with feelings of *vismād* or awe, pass through an experience of Logos, as an intensely compassionate spiritual person. This person is '*Guru*', who is full of *prasād(i)*. He is also *Nirāṅkār* who creates out of His over-flowing compassion and then emancipates His creations. This Guru is that whom Bhai Gurdas calls *jot(i)* which passes from one Guru to another. Hebrew mystics describe it with the help of a sound symbol (spoken word of the Deity). Sufi and Christian mystics employ a light symbol. Light and sound are both forms of energy. These symbols are on the same footing, because their meaning is one. Let us change the symbol of Bhai Gurdas. We may substitute *gursabad(u)* for *gur(u)jot(i)*. The inner meaning remains unaltered. This *gursabad(u)* is the same *sabad* of *gurbāṇī* which, as we saw above, carries the meaning of divine creative energy. *Gurbāṇī* expects us to realize the true *sabad*, which created the entire cosmos.³⁹ Thus *gursabad(u)*, *gur(u)jot(i)* and *sat(i)gur(u)* are similar terms with equivalent senses, which is in common with the idea of Logos. If Sufis and Christians name Logos in terms of the founders of their religions, Bhai Gurdas does the same. He calls it Guru Nanak. Thus we have two Guru Nanaks. When we speak of Guru Nanak as treading upon this earth, he is the human guru, he is the historical Nanak. When he is described as the creator of worlds, he is the celestial Nanak, the perennial Guru, the Logos. Thus the concept of Logos is as much a part of the Sikh tradition as that of any other. Bhai Sher Singh speaks of Logos to prove that it is a common denominator of several religions and also relates it to '*nām*'.

Tuñ tññ parī pūran sarab viāpak jot eñ ... Hññ tññ eñ koī savanaṛā Om mantra, 'Onam akhar tribhavaṇ sārū ... tññ veñ aṁmrit, is karke aṁmrit akhar (Logos)... O... ikko ik puttārā (The only begotton son).⁴⁰ ... O son-añḍiā, O baṭak bijā, O buḍhe beḍiā, O vśiva karmanā,⁴¹ O sudhākhrā, O onam mantrā, O anām nāmā, O nām nirañjanā, hññ main tainḍi upamā kī karāñ, āpaṇe pitā vāñg tññ vī net net aggam, akhkhārāñ toñ uppar, man bāñi toñ uppar⁴² ..."

The word Logos is used and both the symbols of light and sound are associated with it. Logos is *sarab viāpak jot* as well as *amrit akkhar* or *sudhākhar*. The attribute *amrit* implies its eternal nature. By alluding to *viśava karamana*, its creative nature is also affirmed. By describing it as *iko ik puttār*, the idea of the first creation is suggested. It is eternal, but creates all words in its turn. We may conclude by saying that it is *nāu* which is created by *āpinai āp(u)*, before *duyī kudarat(i)*, is created by it.

Just as Bhai Gurdas speaks of Guru Nanak and other Gurus in celestial terms, Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh speaks of *Gurū Granth* in similar terms:

Iuñ hī Sikhkhāñ dī dharam pustak, Āḍi Granth bāre samajhñā chāhīe. Ām khiāl iuñ hai, ju Āḍi Granth pahilā granth Sikh dharam dā hai, jiveñ dasveñ Gurū dā Dasam Granth nāmī granth dūjā granth hai. Je iuñ huñdā tññ dūjā granth Granth na kahāuñdā sagoñ Dutiya Granth akhvāuñdā. Dasam Granth dā bhāv tññ dasveñ Gurū dā rachiā hoiā jāñ dasveñ Gurū dī chhatarchhāi heṭh rachiā hoiā granth. Par Āḍi Granth dā bhāv bilkul vakhkhārā hai. Is dā bhāv hai us giāñ dā granth jis dā śabadākār spaṣṭ ho ke sriṣṭi de āḍi vich akāl purakh de gurū-lakṣa de garabh vich bajhjhā.⁴³

Man's religious consciousness not only demands an eternal teacher, it also feels the need of an eternal book. The notion of *anāḍi Veda* and *Koran* as the message of Allah are expressions of this need. When a Sikh

mystic sets out on his spiritual journey, he begins by *nām japāṇā*. This *sādhana* takes many forms, the earliest being reciting and singing of *gurbāṇī* or *gursabad(u)*. This *nām* gradually leads the aspirant to *sach khaṇḍ* where He realizes celestial *gursabad(u)* or eternal *nām*. Thus we have two *gurbāṇīs* or two *sabads* or two *Gurū Granths*. Both are inter-related.

After describing *sach khaṇḍ* in 37th stanza of the *Jap(u)*, Guru Nanak mentions, in 38th stanza, the minting of *sabad*. This *sabad* is none other than the celestial *gursabad(u)* which is experienced by the highest souls at the time of their realization of *nirāṅkār* in *sach khaṇḍ*. This celestial and creative *sabad* is also the celestial and creative *nām*.

The two ideas of guruship and creation are inseparable at the celestial level. Logos may be symbolized as a sound, light or a person, but in each case these two ideas get fused and attached to it. When we consider '*sabad*' or '*nām*' at this level, we should bring both to mind. In doing so we would be following Guru Nanak in his description of the two-fold activity of *nirāṅkār* in *sach khaṇḍ*. In the expression *sach khaṇḍ* the first term *sach* bears its usual meaning of an eternal reality. By saying that *nirāṅkār* has His abode in *sach khaṇḍ*, Guru Nanak reiterates the eternal nature of *nirāṅkār*. In *sach khaṇḍ* *nirāṅkār* is creating as well as looking at his creation with the intent of emancipating it. Emancipation is the function of a Guru. *Nirāṅkār* as a creator and as an emancipator, is guru *karatā* or *karatā* guru. From the idea of the creator Guru, we pass on to the idea of creative *sabad* and then on to the idea of creative '*nām*', '*sabad*' and '*nām*' being synonymous. The eternal *nirāṅkār* may be designated as 'True *sabad*' or 'True *nām*'. We may thus infer that True *nām* or *sat(i) nām(u)* means *nirāṅkār* of *sach khaṇḍ* which is both a Creator and a Guru. The idea of Guru is an inevitable element in the idea of *sat(i) nām(u)*. Those Sikhs who utter *sat(i) nām(u)* and *wāhigurū* together, follow a very sound instinct or tradition. When *sat(i) nām(u)* is experienced as the celestial Guru and Creator in mystic life, its eternal and infinite nature and incessant activity inspires emotions of wonder and awe in the minds of mystics. Seen from the point of view of experience, *sat(i) nām(u)* signifies not only eternal reality but also its

creative and emancipatory activity. It thus becomes a very dynamic concept. Energy and mind and both involved in its dynamism.

The creative attribute of God is very often mentioned in *gurbānī* in terms of *hukam*, *nirguṇa* Brahman is sometime called *aphur* Brahman. By its free volition or *hukam* it causes *sphur* Brahman to appear. The term *phurnā* is another symbolic usage like sound or light and thus a new name for Logos. *Hukam* which gives rise to *phurnā* (ਫੁਰਨਾ) is also a metaphor. *Hukam* and *phurnā* represent the first divine impulse or act, which we decided to associate with *sat(i) nām(u)*. Here, we see that *sat(i) nām(u)* cannot be equated with *nirguṇa* Brahman. In terms of the three-tier description of Brahman, *sat(i) nām(u)* is neither *nirguṇa nirāṅkār* nor *saguṇa sākār*, but midway between the two, i.e. *saguṇa nirāṅkār* and *saguṇa sākār*. By thus keeping it in the region of *phurnā* of first creative impulse and above the empirical words we assure its celestial character as well as its infinity and eternity. Its infinity implies that all the divine qualities that are manifested in the world, are present in *sat(i) nām(u)* in a potential form; *sat(i) nām(u)* is thus the locus of possibilities. When some of its qualities become actual in manifestation, the world is created and begins to evolve. During the course of its evolution, other qualities are actualized, the best among them being the attribute of guruship, manifested in historical gurus, prophets etc. In *sat(i) nām(u)* qualities like guruship and creatorship exist in their ideal and perfect form, in manifestation they are actualized and particularised. God, when actualizing such qualities is called *karatā purakh(u)*, when possessing them in their ideal form, differentiated from one another, it is called *sat(i) nām(u)* ; when possessing them in their undifferentiated form (which is the same thing as to say that he does not possess any qualities, it is called *Oaṁkār*. The inner meanings of *hukam(u)*, *sabad(u)*, *nām(u)*, *sat(i) nām(u)*, *nirāṅkār*, *gur(u)jot(i)*, *gursabad(u)* are the same, provided they are taken in their celestial aspect.

Before closing, we would like to point out once again the practical import of the concept of *sat(i) nām(u)* for its devotees. By contemplating upon it, they imbibe its qualities of dynamism, creativity, energy, compassion, teaching, guiding, etc. They become activists and lead other

men to salvation. The development of strong and noble personalities is the sure outcome of mystical evolution. Here Rudolf Otto's words are very relevant:

Almost every type of mystical experience demands surrender of the will, but in most cases it asks simply the submissible resignation of self-will, a denial of man's will before the will of God, This Eckhart knows well, but at the same time there is for him also something greater; the unifying of the will with the will of the Highest for fresh action. Thus Eckhart is the herald of the will, which united with the divine will, has become free, and no one has spoken more magnificently than he of the power of a liberated will. Will is joined with will. Into the eternal, active and unified will of the Creator, individual and sundered will is merged but in such a way that in the renewed will of the unified subject, now lives the eternal, holy and almighty will.⁴⁴

Such is the vision of the life, a Sikh aspirant looks forward to in *sach khaṇḍ*. This *khaṇḍ* does not belong to *nirguṇa* Brahman or *nirguṇa nirañkāṛ*. It is the *khaṇḍ* of *saguṇa nirañkāṛ* or *nirañkāṛ*, who is there exercising his will freely.

Jiv Jiv hukam tivai tiv kār.⁴⁵

The aspirant, when he arrives here, also becomes very active but his action flows out of a will which has inwardly been harmonized perfectly with the will of *nirañkāṛ*. He may be called *sachiārā* because he now acts upon the teaching presented in the last line of the first stanza of *Japu* :

Hukam(i) rajāi chalṇā Nānak likhiā nāl(i).⁴⁶

Beyond this he also is the embodiment of the highest ideal of a Sikh, presented in the last two lines of the last *sloka* of the *Jap(u)*.

Jinī nām(u) dhiāiā gae masakat(i) ghāl(i)

Nānak te mukh ujale ketī chhuṭī nāl(i).⁴⁷

NOTES

- 1 Ernest Trumpp, *The Adi Granth*, p. 1.
- 2 "The Meaning of *Satinām(u)*", *The Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. I, No. 1, (June, 1969), p. 46.
- 3 ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ ਕਥੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ॥
ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ ਪੂਰਬਲਾ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 1083.
- 4 Sant Singh Sekhon, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
- 5 Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, p. 3.
- 6 "The Metaphysical Implications of Sikhism", *The Journal of Religious Studies*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
- 7 ਈਘੈ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਊਘੈ ਸਰਗੁਨ ਕੋਲ ਕਰਤ ਬਿਚਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਮੇਰਾ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 827.
- 8 ਜਹਾ ਬੋਲ ਤਹ ਅਫਰ ਆਵਾ॥ ਜਹ ਅਬੋਲ ਤਹ ਮਨੁ ਨ ਰਹਾਵਾ॥
ਬੋਲ ਅਬੋਲ ਮਧਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਈ॥ ਜਸ ਓਹੁ ਹੈ ਤਸ ਲਖੈ ਨ ਕੋਈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 340.
- 9 ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ॥
ਦੁਜੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 463.
- 10 ਸਚ ਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ॥ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 11 ਸੋਈ ਸੋਈ ਸਦਾ ਸਚੁ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਚੀ ਨਾਈ॥
ਹੈ ਭੀ ਹੋਸੀ ਜਾਇ ਨ ਜਾਸੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਰਚਾਈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- 12 ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲੇ ਜੰਤ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਖੰਡ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ॥
... ..
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਆਗਾਸ ਪਾਤਾਲ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਆਕਾਰ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਸਭ ਭਵਨ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਉਧਰੇ ਸੁਨਿ ਸੁਵਨ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 284.
- 13 ਜੇਤਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇਤਾ ਨਾਉ॥ ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਥਾਉ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 14 It is obvious that in this context Word and Name are completely synonymous...In some cases, however, there is an implied distinction...In such cases the Word appears as the medium of communication and the Name as the object of communication. Both remain, however, expressions of God's Truth and the distinction is a very fine one, normally determined by the context. Almost invariably Truth as meditated by the Guru is referred to as the Word, whereas Truth as received and meditated on by the believer tends to be expressed in terms of the Name. *Gurū kī sabad* and *nām japnā* are both thoroughly characteristic expressions. There is, however, no basic difference involved and occasionally one of the two is used where the other would be expected.
W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, pp. 195-96.
- 15 ਉਤਪਤਿ ਪਰਲਉ ਸਬਦੇ ਹੋਵੈ॥ ਸਬਦੇ ਹੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਓਪਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 117

- 16 ਏਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਏਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਸਭ ਏਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਉਤਪਤਿ ਚਲੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1334.
- 17 ਜਿਨਿ ਜਗੁ ਸਿਰਜਿ ਸਮਾਇਆ ਸੋ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਜਾਣੇਵਾ॥
ਸਚੜਾ ਦੂਰਿ ਨ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਪਛਾਣੇਵਾ॥
ਸਚੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਪਛਾਣਹੁ ਦੂਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਏਹ ਰਚਨਾ ਰਾਚੀ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 581.
- 18 ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰਦੇ ਨਮਹ॥ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਗੁਰਦੇ ਨਮਹ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰਦੇ ਨਮਹ॥ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰਦੇਵਦੇ ਨਮਹ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 262.
- 19 ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਮਾਤਾ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਪਿਤਾ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰਾ॥
... ..
ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਭਿ ਪਾਪ ਹਰਤਾ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਪਤਿਤ ਪਵਿਤ ਕਰਾ।
ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਆਦਿ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਜੁਗੁ ਚਗੁ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਮੰਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿ ਉਧਰਾ।
ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਮਸਕਰਾ। *Ibid.*, p. 250.
- 20 *Vedanta According to Sankara and Ramanuj*, p. 209.
- 21 ਕਰਮ ਖੰਡ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਜੋਰੁ॥ ਤਿਥੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰੁ॥
ਤਿਥੈ ਜੋਧ ਮਹਾ ਬਲ ਸੂਰ॥ ਤਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰ॥
ਤਿਥੈ ਸੀਤੋ ਸੀਤਾ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਮਾਹਿ॥ ਤਾਕੇ ਰੂਪ ਨ ਕਬਨੇ ਜਾਹਿ॥
ਨਾ ਓਹਿ ਮਰਹਿ ਨਾ ਠਾਗੇ ਜਾਹਿ॥ ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਰਾਮੁ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਮਾਹਿ॥
ਤਿਥੈ ਭਗਤ ਵਸਹਿ ਕੇ ਲੋਅ॥ ਕਰਹਿ ਅਨੰਦ ਸਚਾ ਮਨਿ ਸੋਇ॥
ਸਚਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ॥ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ॥
ਤਿਥੈ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਵਰਭੰਡ॥ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਕਬੈ ਤ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਅੰਤ॥
ਤਿਥੈ ਲੋਅ ਲੋਅ ਆਕਾਰ॥ ਜਿਵ ਜਿਵ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਤਿਵੈ ਤਿਵ ਕਾਰ॥
ਵੇਖੈ ਵਿਗਸੈ ਕਰਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ। ਨਾਨਕ ਕਥਨਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਾਚੁ। *Gurū Granth*, p. 8.
- 22 *The Seeker's Path*, p. 101.
- 23 ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ॥ *Vārāṇ Bhāi Gurdās*, 24. 25.
- 24 ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਣੁ ਸਚੁ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 24. 18.
- 25 ਹਰਖਹੁ ਸੋਗਹੁ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਹਰਣ ਭਰਣ ਸਮਰਥੁ ਸਹੰਦਾ॥
... ..
ਗੁਰ ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਗੁਰੁ ਹਰਿਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ਸਦਾ ਵਿਗਸੰਦਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 24. 21.
- 26 ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਅਕਾਰ ਜਿਸੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸਿਰੰਦਾ ਸੋਈ ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 40. 12.
- 27 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਹੈ... ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 15. 1.
- 28 ਦਲਭੰਜਨ ਗੁਰੁ ਸੁਰਮਾ ਵਡ ਜੋਧਾ ਬਹੁ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ॥
ਪੁਛਨਿ ਸਿਖ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਕਰਿ ਛਿਅ ਮਹਿਲਾਂ ਤਕਿ ਦਰਸੁ ਨਿਹਾਰੀ ॥
ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਬੋਲੇ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ॥
ਕਲਿ ਜੁਗਿ ਪੀੜੀ ਸੋਢੀਆਂ ਨਿਹਚਲ ਨੀਵ ਉਸਾਰਿ ਖਲਾਰੀ ॥

ਜੁਗਿ ਜੁਗਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਧਰੇ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ ॥

Ibid., p. 1. 48.

29 *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, (Tr. Trask, Willard R.), p. 75.

30 The Supreme God is taken here to be immanent in all that constitutes the Universe, including Gods and Men. This fact is indicated by the name generally given to in the Upnishads, viz. *Is* or *Isvara* (Lord) who lives as the 'inner guides' (*āntaryāmi*) in all objects in the universe. *Isvara* in this sense is the personified form of Brahman... To express the same in the terminology of later Vedānta, God as conceived here is the material as well as the efficient cause of the universality

M. Hiriyanna, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, p. 50.

31 *Vārāṇ Bhāi Gurdās*, 1.45-48.

32 *Sufism, Its Saints and Shrines*, p. 58.

With regard to this uncreated essence, similarity of Yogi and Sufi concepts may be seen in the following passage of Titus Buckhardt:

'As for the verse in the Koran which describes the nature of the spirit in these words, 'They will question you about the spirit; say to them: The spirit proceeds from the command (al-amr) of my Lord... (XVII. 84). This can be interpreted in either sense — that the spirit is of the same nature as the Divine command — or order — and is itself, on an ontological level, immediately below the order. If there are both these aspects of the spirit, it is because it is the mediator between the Divine being and the conditioned universe. Uncreated in its immutable essence, it is yet created in as much as it is the first cosmic entity... The uncreated essence of the spirit corresponds to what Hindus call *purush* or *purushottam*.'

— *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, pp. 80-81.

33 *Dictionary of Philosophy*, Dagobert D. Runes, p. 183.

34 *Ibid.*, 183.

35 *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 8, p. 134.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 137.

37 ਸਚ ਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥

Gurū Granth, p. 8.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

39 ਸਚੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਪਛਾਣਹੁ ਦੂਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਏਹ ਰਚਨਾ ਰਾਚੀ ॥

Ibid., p. 581.

40 ਤੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਪਰੀ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਰਬ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਜੋਤ ਦੇਂ...ਹਾਂ ਤੂੰ ਦੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਸਵਨਤਾ ਓਮ ਮੰਤਰ, 'ਓਨਮ ਅਖਰ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਸਾਰੁ...ਤੂੰ ਵੇਂ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ, ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਅਖਰ...ਓ...ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਪੁਤਰਾ...

"In whatever ways the idea of Christ, as put forward by the writers of the New Testament originated, the fact remains that from the very beginning he was considered the manifestation of the cosmic or pre-existent Christ, first-born of all creation, the only begotten son of the father, the one in whom the whole universe has its consistency; the judge of the living and the dead, the light which illumines every human coming into this world, the one from whom everything has come

and to whom everything returns". R Pannikar, "*Christianity and World Religions*," *Christianity*, p. 84.

- 41 ਓ-ਸੋਨ-ਐਭਿਆ, ਓ ਬਟਕ ਬੀਜਾ, ਓ ਬੁਢੇ ਬੇਡੀਆ, ਓ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਕਰਮਨਾ.

"Omnipotence, for example, which is a characteristic of all the gods, becomes personified, as the Highest, under the name of "all-doer" (*Visva-Karmana*). He is the great architect of the universe says one hymn, "who assigns to the gods their names and to whom all go for instruction." M. Hiriyanna, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

- 42 ਓ ਸੁਧਾਖਰਾ, ਓ ਓਨਮ ਸੰਤਰਾ, ਓ ਅਨਾਮ ਨਾਮਾ, ਓ ਨਾਮ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਾ,

ਹਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਤੈਡੀ ਉਪਮਾ ਕੀ ਕਰਾਂ, ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਵਾਂਗ ਤੂੰ ਵੀ ਨੇਤ ਨੇਤ ਅਗੰਮ,

ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ, ਮਨ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ..." *Wāhigurū Darśana*, Vol. II. pp. 159-61.

- 43 ਇਉਂ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਏ। ਆਮ ਖਿਆਲ ਇਉਂ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਹੈ, "ਜਿਵੇਂ ਦਸਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਨਾਮੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਦੂਜਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਇਉਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਦੂਜਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਨ ਕਹਾਉਂਦਾ ਸਗੋਂ ਦੁਤੀਯ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦਾ। ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ ਦਸਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਰਚਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਾਂ ਦਸਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਤਰ-ਛਾਇਆ ਹੇਠ ਰਚਿਆ ਚੋਇਆ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ। ਪਰ ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਕਾਰ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੇ ਆਦਿ ਵਿਚ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੇ ਗੁਰੂ-ਲਕਸ਼ ਦੇ ਗਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਬੱਝਾ।

Puṇḍrika, pp. 339-40

- 44 *Mysticism, East and West*. (tr) Bearth L. Bracy & Richard C. Payne, p. 226.

- 45 ਜਿਵ ਜਿਵ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਤਿਵੈ ਤਿਵ ਕਾਰ॥

Gurū Granth, p. 8.

- 46 ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ॥

Ibid., p. 1.

- 47 ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਲਿ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਕੋਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ॥

Ibid., p. 8.

KARATĀ PURAKH(U)

Manmohan Sehgal

According to the *Brahmopaniṣad* God is one, He is innate among all animates, is omnipresent and is the Inner Self of all living beings.¹

In the *Mūl Mantra* while giving the basic attributes of God, Guru Nanak calls Him as the *karatā purakh(u)*. To me it seems that he is looking at Him as the 'Inner Self of all living beings'. He and He alone, is the Creating Power of the universe. He Himself is the Creator and the created including the act of creation. He is the master of all forms of the universe, all modes of nature and all elements of physical worlds. As it is said by Guru Ram Das:

He Himself is the Chatrik-bird : He Himself the fall of Nectar.

He Himself maketh us drink His nectarian drink.²

The third Guru praises Him as the Creator :

He, is the Creator, who Maketh us work.

What can any one else do or by doing accomplish anything?³

He, through His sweet imperative, has created three main gods, three modes of Nature, ten incarnated spirits and the rest of this Universe:

- (i) He Created Brahma. Vishnu and Shiva.⁴
- (ii) It is He who createth the three Modes and causes attached to *māyā*.⁵
- (iii) He creates the tri-modal universe and also destroys it.⁶
- (iv) In His will, He Created the ten *avatārs*, and innumerable gods and demons.⁷

The ancient Indian cultural tradition invests God with mastery over the present, the past and the future. The Upanishadic rishis regarded

Him as the source of birth, life and death and the only cause of this and the other worlds.

The Brahman Himself is the fountain-source of birth, life and death of all beings. He is the omniscient, the basic cause of the universe and the personal God of all.⁸

In this connection one comes across very informative, clear and cogent quotations from the *Gurū Granth*:

- (i) All over, the one alone is to be seen.⁹
- (ii) ... One God permeates all.¹⁰
- (iii) He, Himself is the Doer and the Done.
He alone is capable of this, Nanak;
He alone subsists. No second has been or will ever be.¹¹
- (iv) Thou art the Primal *Puruṣa*, the Transcendent Creator, one cannot know Thy bounds or end.
And thou are Immanent too, Pervading all, Merged in all.¹²
- (v) From Thee are the egg-born, the foetus—born, the sweat-born, the earth-born, yea, all the creatures there are. And this is Thy Glory that Thou Pervadest all, all over.¹³
- (vi) It is the God Himself who hath Created eighty-four lakhs of species,

Yea, the Creator-Lord, of Himself, Doeth and Causeth (all) to be done, and so Driveth He (all) on. Yea, of Himself, He Establisheth and Disestablisheth and Watcheth (all), and, of Himself, He Revealeth Himself through the Guru.¹⁴

According to the *Gurū Granth*, *Akāl Purakh(u)* has created, through His divine will, this whole world of phenomena with His word.¹⁵ As Creator, He creates, destroys, changes and rechanges. He is also spread all over. It is He, who has created everything, whether animate or inanimate. Says Guru Gobind Singh, while singing His praises:

He Creates all, also destroys all, He saves His beloved souls from

all pain, physical and mental. One, who remembers Him with true heart and faith, attains salvation from all worldly attachments.¹⁶

In the beginning it was the Brahman only. There was no earth, no sky, no sun and moon, neither Brahma nor Vishnu nor Mahesh existed. Human Beings, their creeds, the cycle of birth and death, pleasure and pain and the sacred scriptures were all non-existent. He alone existed in His *akhaṇḍ samādhī*. Suddenly the Divine *samādhī* disrupted and a 'Will to Create' sprang up in Him and He, the Brahma, brought all the worlds and underworlds into existence, through His word.¹⁷

He is, therefore, without doubt, the greatest Creator. The beauty of His creation is another incomparable characteristic. Science has done many wonders, but it has not been able to create a human being. Man has not succeeded in creating planets, like sun and moon. The physical world is full of wonderful specimens of his creative capacity. Brahman is the only creating force, and no creation exists or is possible or even conceivable without or beyond Him. He creates and feels pleasure in this process. It is His great will that is supreme, says Guru Nanak. All happenings and all activities of the world depend upon Him; the creation and the destruction of the universe is His play.¹⁸

He is the source of all life in the Universe. It is He, who lives within living beings in the form of soul. After one's death, the part meets the whole and the soul is dissolved in Him, who is the Absolute Soul. Even the physical elements of the Universe dissolve in Him after they perish. He is all in all, and there is none but He. *Gurbāṇī* indicates :

He Establisheth, Disestablisheth in a moment, for, there's not another without Him.¹⁹

The divine Will, which we have referred to as the basic cause to Creation, found in the Bible also, which says that there was none else but God and God said, 'let there be light' and there was light. The Sufis also talk of God's Will, God said, *kun* (become), and it resulted in *fa-ya-*

kun (became). The *Koran* has accepted *Khudā* as the Great Creator (30:11). *Gurbānī*, however, does not preach accidentalism. It terms the creation of the universe as the 'play' of Brahman. 'Play' is the fittest simile, because it is only the play which can be started or finished at the player's will:

Thy Will alone Works: O Thou, the Innerknower !

What can we, mere creatures, do? Thine is all this Play.²⁰

Gurbānī gives another specific impression, namely that Brahman not only creates the Universe from within Himself, but is also reflected through it:

This world that ye see is the manifestation of the Lord:

Yea, it is the Lord that ye see.²¹

Now, there arises another question. If the Lord has produced this universe from out of His word or *hukam*, was any span of time involved in it? In the *Jap(u)* of Guru Nanak, we have a verse which is supposed to say:

One Word, and the whole Universe throbbed into being.²²

It would support the theory that the material universe did not take any length of time in forming. But I beg to differ from this point of view because it is not supported by *gurbānī*. The medieval Punjabi word *pasāu* is the *Apabhramṣa* of a Sanskrit word *prasāra* which presupposes slow but continuous progress. The divine manifestation was a process. The next verse in the *Jap(u)*, 'And myriads of gushing rivers (of life) appeared'²³ also supports our claim. *Paingal Upaniṣhad*²⁴ indicates clearly that Nature (*Prakṛit*) is an off-shoot of Brahman. All the three modes of nature were there in a balanced form. That state was called *sākṣī chaitanya* and this *chaitanya* spread the canvas of this universe gradually. Guru Nanak, in *rāga Tukhārī*, sings of the 'Formless Lord contained in His creation'²⁵, upholding the fact of gradual manifestation. Guru Gobind Singh has used the words *Udakarakha* and *akarakha* respectively, for the processes of creation and total destruction of the universe.²⁶

Udakarkha or the manifestation of the universe occurs in the following order, according to *gurbāṇī*:

- (i) Unqualified Brahman
- (ii) Qualified Brahman
- (iii) Ego
- (iv) Soul
- (v) Nature (twenty everchanging elements, five *tanmātrās*, five senses of knowledge, five senses of action, five physical elements).

We generally find *gurbāṇī* talking of the physical elements in the context of the Creation of the Universe:

- (i) Of the five elements, Thou Created the world of form;²⁷
- (ii) From the True One came the wind; from the wind came the water;
From the water sprang the three worlds; and He, the Lord, Pervaded all.²⁸

Gurbāṇī, thus, accepts water as the basic element of the Universe.

All universe is His Manifestation and He alone supports it. It is His Divine Will which controls the creation. The whole of our empirical world is the expression of His *hukam*, the Divine Will. The *gurbāṇī* speaks of *hukam* in two ways: It is the Principle of Manifestation as well as His Will. The systematic orderliness of Nature is the principle and an accidental calamity may be termed as His Will.

Hukam is both the cause and the effect and the Lord Himself is at once the Creator and the Creation:

For without Govind, he see-eth not another, Yea, He the One, the Creator and the Cause.²⁹

He has not separated Himself from the Universe after its creation. He is the *purakh(u)* that is, He lives within His Creation—omniscient, omnipresent as He is.

Pervadeth He all the spheres and all the parts and peoples of the earth.³⁰

Śvetāśvataropaniṣad says:

As oil lives in seeds, ghee in curd, water in springs and fire lives in wood, so Brahman lives in all and the soul can experience it only through dawn of Truth and *tapasyā*.³¹

In that very manner *Atharva Veda* speaks of one light which is reflected in many ways.³²

Gurbāṇī also says :

He, whose Light informs the souls of all, Yea, Pervadeth He all everywhere, up and down, across.³³

By calling Him *kartā purakh(u)*, the Guru introduces the masculine quality of God, alongwith His Creative and Omnipresent quality. Some scholars regard this characteristic to be of semetic origin. It has been claimed that the male character of Brahman has appeared in Indian literature, for the first time through *gurbāṇī*.³⁴ This view is erroneous and is born out of ignorance of Indian literature. There is a *sloka* found in the Vedas that the absolute 'Person' has thousands of heads, eyes and feet.³⁵ In the *Atharva Veda* the Lord is called *Sahasr bāhū puruṣa* (The Person with thousands of arms). Still, because He is unqualified, does not have any head, eye or foot, as has been stated by Guru Nanak:

Thousands are Thy eyes, yet hast Thou eyes?
Thousands are Thy forms, yet hast Thou a form?
Thousands are Thy lotus-feet, yet hast Thou feet?
Thousands are Thy noses to smell, yet hast Thou a nose,
O, wonder of wonders?³⁶

NOTES

- 1 एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरालम् । *Brahmopaniṣad*, 16.
- 2 ਹਰਿ ਆਪੇ ਸਾਰੰਗ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਧਾਰਾ॥ ਹਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਆਪਿ ਪੀਆਵਣਹਾਰਾ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 165.
- 3 ਆਪਿ ਕਰਾਏ ਕਰਤਾ ਸੇਈ॥ ਹੇਰੁ ਕਿ ਕਰੇ ਕੀਤੈ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 124.
- 4 ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਦੇਵ ਉਪਾਇਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1279.
- 5 ਤ੍ਰੈਗੁਣ ਆਪਿ ਸਿਰਜਿਅਨੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੇਹੁ ਵਧਾਇਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1237.

- 6 ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਸਾਜਿ ਮੇਖੁਲੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਆਪਿ ਉਪਾਇ ਖਪਾਇਦਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p.1037.
- 7 ਹੁਕਮਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਦਸ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ॥ ਦੇਵ ਦਾਨਵ ਅਗਣਤ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p.1037.
- 8 एषः सर्वेश्वर एषः सर्वज्ञ एषोऽन्तर्धान्येषो योनिः सर्वस्य प्रभाकोऽप्यसौ हि भूतानाम् ।
Maṇḍūkyaopaniṣad, 6.
- 9 ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਆਵੈ ਸਭੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 189.
- 10 ...ਏਕੁ ਰਵਿਆ ਸਰਬੰਗਨਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1080.
- 11 ਆਪਹਿ ਕੀਆ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਆਪਹਿ ਕਰਨੈ ਜੋਗੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕੋ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਦੂਸਰ ਹੋਆ ਨ ਹੋਗੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 250.
- 12 ਤੂੰ ਆਇ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅਪਰੰਪਰੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਾਰੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਜਾਇ ਜੀਉ॥
ਤੂੰ ਘਟ ਘਟ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ ਜੀਉ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 448.
- 13 ਅੰਡਜ ਜੇਰਜ ਉਤਭੁਜ ਸੋਤਜ ਤੇਰੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਜੰਤਾ॥
ਏਕੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਮੈ ਤੇਰਾ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਤੂ ਸਭਨਾ ਮਾਹਿ ਰਵੰਤਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 596.
- 14 ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਆਪਿ ਉਪਾਏ॥
... ..
ਆਪੇ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਏ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਿਉ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਿਵੈ ਚਲਾਇਦਾ॥
... ..
ਆਪੇ ਥਾਪਿ ਉਥਾਪੇ ਵੇਖੈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਆਪਿ ਬੁਝਾਇਦਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1061.
- 15 ਉਤਪਤਿ ਪਰਲਉ ਸਬਦੇ ਹੋਵੈ॥ ਸਬਦੇ ਹੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਓਪਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- 16 ਸਭ ਕੇ ਕਾਲ ਸਭਨ ਕੇ ਕਰਤਾ॥ ਰੋਗ ਸੋਗ ਦੇਖਨ ਕੇ ਹਰਤਾ॥
ਏਕ ਚਿੱਤ ਜਿਹ ਇਕ ਛਿਨ ਧਿਆਇਓ॥ ਕਾਲ ਫਾਸ ਕੇ ਬੀਚ ਨ ਆਇਓ॥
Dasam Granth, p. 11.
- 17 ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਧੰਧੂਕਾਰਾ॥ ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥
ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਸੁਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ॥
... ..
ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ॥ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ॥
ਨਾਰਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਨਮਾ॥ ਨਾ ਕੇ ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਦਾ॥
... ..
ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਨ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਾਸਤ॥ ਪਾਠ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਉਦੈ ਨਹੀ ਆਸਤ॥
... ..
ਖੰਡ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਅਰੰਭੇ ਗੁਪਤਹੁ ਪਰਗਟੀ ਆਇਦਾ॥ *Gurū Granth*, pp. 1035-36.
- 18 ਤੁਭ ਤੇ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ॥ ਤੂ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖਹਿ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1125.
- 19 ਖਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਥਾਪਿ ਉਥਾਪਦਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 706.
- 20 ਸਭੁ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਵਰਤਦਾ ਤੂੰ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ॥
ਹਮ ਜੰਤ ਵਿਚਾਰੇ ਕਿਆ ਕਰਹ ਸਭੁ ਖੋਲੁ ਤੁਮ ਸੁਆਮੀ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- 21 ਏਹੁ ਵਿਸੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਏਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਨਦਰੀ ਆਇਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 922.

- 22 ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ॥
- 23 ਤਿਸਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰਿਆਉ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 24 *Chhāndogyopaniṣad* *Ibid.*
- 25 ਰਚਨਾ ਰਾਚਿ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੀ...॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 1107.
- 26 ਜਬ ਉਦਕਰਖ ਕਰਾ ਕਰਤਾਰਾ॥ ਪ੍ਰਜਾ ਧਰਤ ਤਬ ਦੇਹ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥
ਜਬ ਆਕਰਖ ਕਰਤ ਹੋ ਕਬਹੂੰ॥ ਤੁਮ ਮੈ ਮਿਲਤ ਦੇਹ ਧਰ ਸਭਹੂੰ॥ *Dasam Granth*, p. 1387.
- 27 ਪੰਚ ਤਤੁ ਕਰਿ ਤੁਪੁ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਭ ਸਾਜੀ...॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 736.
- 28 ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ॥
ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੇਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 29 ਬਿਨੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਈ॥ ਕਰਨ ਕਰਾਵਨ ਕਰਤਾ ਸੋਈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 189.
- 30 ਖੰਡ ਦੀਪ ਸਭ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਰਵਿਆ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਭ ਲੋਊ॥ *Ibid.*, 535.
- 31 एवमात्माऽत्मनि गृह्यतेऽसौ सत्येनेदं तपसा योऽनुपश्यति
तिलेषु तैलं दध्नीद सपिरापः श्रोतस्वरणीषु चाग्निः ।।
Śvetāśvataropaniṣad, 1.15.
- 32 एकं ज्योतिर्बहुधा विभाति ।। *Atharva Veda*, 13.3.17.
- 33 ਸਰਬ ਜੋਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਜੋਤਿ॥ ਧਾਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਓਤਿ ਪੋਤਿ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 294.
- 34 Sher Singh, *The Philosophy of Sikhism*, p. 141.
- 35 सहस्रशीर्षः पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात् । *Rig Veda*, 10.90.1., *Yajur Veda*, 31.1.
- 36 ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਨੈਨ ਨਨ ਨੈਨ ਹਹਿ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਉ ਸਹਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਨਾ ਏਕ ਤੋਹੀ॥
ਸਹਸ ਪਦ ਬਿਮਲ ਨਨ ਏਕ ਪਦ ਗੰਧ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਗੰਧ ਇਵ ਚਲਤ ਮੋਹੀ॥
Gurū Granth, p. 13

NIRBHAU, NIRVAIR(U)

J.S. Neki

The *mūl mantra* attempts, most cryptically, to define the indefinable God. It refers to the truth of His existence and the primacy of His self-luminous being; His unity and solity; His immanence as well as transcendence; His creativity and personality and His non-temporarity, birthlessness as well as deathlessness.

However, apart from these metaphysical, personal and relational attributes, the *mūl mantra* also incorporates two important ethical attributes of God-head, namely: *nirbhau* and *nirvair(u)*.

Nirbhau, means 'sans fear' and *nirvair(u)* means 'sans hostility'. However, it is important to note that *vair* is a more inclusive concept than hostility and subsumes jealousy, hatred, enmity, vengeance and spite as well; hence sans hostility here should really mean without any one or a combination of these.

It is apparent that these are negative attributes of God-head. However, it has been hinted by scholars, such as Vinoba Bhave, that these have their own importance in the history of Indian philosophic thought.

The *Gurū Granth* abounds in positive ethical attributes of God. He is extolled as divine (*pavittar, punīt, pāwan, pāk*, etc.), as the treasure of goodness and the mine of virtue (*guṇ-nidhān, guṇ-tās, guṇī gahirā*), as truth and truly existent (*sat, sach*), as bliss and perfect calm (*anand, sahaj*), as discrete and discriminating (*bibekī*), as fair and just (*ādīl, niāī*), as generous and forgiving (*dātā, dānī, dayāl, bakhśīnd*), as nourisher of the poor (*garīb niwāj, dīn bandhū*), as protector and helper (*rākhanhār, sahāī, sahāīk*), as the refuge of the unprotected, the unsupported, and the uprooted (*nithāwīān dā thānī, anāthān-nāth*), as bestower of desires (*ichhā-pūrak*), remover of misery (*dukh-bhanjan*) and

with scores of other epithets that describe His moral nature in a positive way. But the scripture is also studded with several negative attributes of God. He is, for instance, described as (*be-aib, nih-kalañk*), without impurity (*nirmal*), desireless (*nihkām*), without the least tinge of greed (*til nā tamāe*), non-dependent (*be-muthāj, ghani*), unwavering (*aḍol*) and infallible (*abhul*). Yet, the only two moral attributes that the Guru chose to incorporate into the *mūl mantra* are *nirbhau* and *nirvair(u)*. This in itself signifies that they are considered to be keynotes of the moral nature of Godhead.

Fear may be existential or it may be situational. Existential fear arises from the exigencies of existence. Fear of the unknown, is one such fear. However, one who is omniscient cannot be subject to it. Nothing is unknown to God, nothing is outside the gamut of His vision and vigilance, nothing is beyond His ken. Then, how can He have fear of the unknown? Another variety of existential fear arises from personal vulnerability. One who is subject to death, fears personal dissolution; one who is subject to infirmity fears disease, and one who is subject to pain fears suffering. All those fears are consequences of personal vulnerability. However, God is liable to none of these. Being *akāl*, He is beyond the throes of time and so beyond death and dissolution. Impenetrable and imperturable, He is not subject to any infirmity or fear. Dwelling in 'Eternal Bliss', he knoweth no suffering. Being so perfectly invulnerable, He is subject to no fear that stems from personal vulnerability. A third variety of existential fear arises from transitoriness of possessions and pleasures.¹ However, all that there is, has emanated from him, and will involute back into Him upon dissolution. Things may lose their existence, but He loses nothing. He is therefore, untouched by their transitoriness and is not afraid of losing anything. It is understandable, then, that God is not subject to existential fear of any kind.

Situational fears are consequent upon external threat and interference, leading to frustration. One kind of situational fear is that of a superior to whom one is answerable and whose desires and instructions one is obliged to carry out. Leave alone carrying out instructions, God does not even consult anyone else in carrying out His designs and actions:

He consulteth none when He createth,
 Nor even when He destroyeth;
 He asketh none when He giveth
 Nor even when He taketh back.²

He is absolutely independent and in this absolute independence lies His fearlessness.

Another kind of situational fear, to which all creation is subject, arises on account of the law, according to which every one is judged and transgressions of which are met with punishment. "This fear is writ upon every forehead; the only exception is the Fearless, Deathless, Formless one."³ Every law supersedes a law-giver; but God Him-self is the ultimate Law-Giver. No laws bind Him—because no law operates outside His will. Since there is no law beyond Him, He is subject to no judgement; hence no fear. A third kind of situational fear arises from the presence of adversaries and enemies. However, one who knoweth no hostility, breeds no enemies. And God, being absolutely without hostility *nirvair(u)*, He cannot have enemies and consequently fear of enemies.

It can be seen that all situational fears assume the presence of something else or someone else, from oneself. It is the soil of 'otherness' in which all situational fears sprout.⁴ But one, who is *advaita*—'devoid of otherness', cannot be liable to situational fears of any kind. God, therefore, is subject to no fear, existential or situational.

Apparently, *nirbhau* is a negative attribute of Godhead, but on closer examination one can discern that a number of important positive attributes seem to be subsumed under it. These are:

- (i) Truly existent : Anyone whose existence can be threatened cannot be considered to be truly existent, for such an existence is essentially dependent. Only the one, who is truly independent and so can neither be threatened nor frightened, is truly existent.
- (ii) Omnipotent : One who is afraid, cannot be omnipotent, for if he were, he wouldn't be afraid. It is only the Mightier Than The Mightiest, who knoweth no fear. "When no one is above Him, then, who can frighten Him? Of whom can He be afraid?"⁵

- (iii) Alone : One who is afraid, stands vis-a-vis another. One who is devoid of 'otherness', stands alone, peerless and matchless. When one says, He is without fear, one does not mean that He is 'fearless', in the sense of being courageous. Courage is not the antithesis of fear, it is the antithesis of cowardice. Both courage and cowardice arise from a state of fear—the former signifies that one surmounts fear; the latter that one succumbs to it. Nonetheless, fear is present in both the situations. God, however, is Fearless, in the sense that He never has any fear.

While He Himself is devoid of Fear, everything else is fettered by the Fear or Awe of His Law (*Hukam*) :

The earth, the firmament and the stars—all stand in the Lord's Awe,
Over them is the All-powerful Law of the Lord,

Yea, in His Fear, blow the winds, glow the fires, and flow the waters.

Poor Indra also bides in His Fear. If there's anyone who's free of Fear,

It's the Lord Himself, alone.⁶

The law, in fact, is the cognitive aspect of that rational bond between the Creator and His creation, effective aspect of which is reverential fear or awe.

God, as *nirbhau*, then, stands in contradistinction to His creation which perpetually remains fear-bound. He stands in contradistinction also, to those gods and goddesses, who are continually labouring under fear of one another's domination. Even Brahma, who is considered to be the creator (competing with Vishnu, the Sustainer, and Shiva, the Destroyer, the other two members of the Holy Trinity of the Hindus), fears other gods, and stands awe-bound before Godhead (*Oamkār*), for even Brahma is His creation.⁷

Not only does God, as *nirbhau*, stand apart from the Hindu deities, He also stands apart from the jealous God of the semetic religions, as *nirvair(u)*.

A jealous God would curse and punish those who worship any other God but Him :

For thou shalt worship no other God; for the Lord,
whose name is jealous, is jealous God.⁸

The voice of the jealous God may be heard in every active conscience as a Ruler who will endure no rival and accept no excuse for transgression and who is severe and implacable.

Jehovah of Judaism is a fiercely jealous God. Christ made him the God of the Universe from the God of the Jews, and preached about his love, more than about his justice. Mohammed, who took up all that was the best in Christianity and Judaism, conceived a God whose mercy was to be everywhere on the men of His faith and He was to protect them against His enemies, the infidels or *kāfirs*, who do not belong to the faith.

A jealous God expresses divine wrath when transgression of His commandments takes place. This wrath destroys the infidels who won't have faith in Him :

I (Moses) was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure wherewith the Lord was wrath against you to destroy you.⁹

The Wrath of God is a symbol of the divine aspect towards evil. Christianity and Judaism have had difficulty in reconciling God's love with His wrath, His Mercy with His Jealousy.

Though Sovereign, Holy Love may be concealed by its own mode of wrath, which appears as though it were the contradiction of God's fundamental of love, the deepest Christian faith triumphantly affirms that the Reality of that wrath, experienced by man in terms of warning, chastising, clearing or in other way, is, in truth, the Reality of the Sovereign Love accomplishing its own redemptive and sanctifying purposes.¹⁰

In so far as the lower consciousness of man identifies with evil, God within wears a forbidding aspect, indicative of opposition to misdeeds. However, it is explained, "This wrath exists only in the lower self

(of man), for, the nature of God towards the evolving soul is always that of love and compassion.”

“Wrath is predicate of evil and anger of falsity, because they, who are in evil, and the subjects of wrath and they who are in falsity are the subjects of anger; and both, in the Word are attributed to Jehovah, that is, to the Lord.” In the words of Juliana of Norwich, “I saw no wrath but on man’s part, and that forgiveth He in us. It is the most impossible thought that may be that God should be wrath”.

Christian view, however, affirms that righteous anger is a virtue, and that since the Being of God as sovereign love is eternally holy, God confronts evil with severity, condemnation, and opposing power, the wrath of God being, in true, the wrath of His sovereign love.

However, anger and wrath, have not been associated with God-head in Sikhism. On the contrary, He is said never to utter an unsweet word :

Honey-tongued ever is my Love,
With mighty great care have I seen,
but He never, ever spoke one bitter word.¹¹

This raises, then, the question of dispensation of His justice. According to Sikh thought, the Lord does give us the fruit of our actions, but He is never vengeful. We reap the harvest of our actions according to the law of karma. He does not show any wrath or anger. The law operates mechanically, and good and bad actions of men produce their corresponding fruits :

Why cursest thou thy Lord, O foolish woman,
When the good and bad that thou receivest,
Is the fruit of thy own deeds?¹²

Yet, God, who is love and compassion par excellence, can’t see His men suffer at the hands of this law. He Himself lends them the benevolent hand of His Grace (*nadar*) and pulls them out of the ‘well of darkness and illusion.’¹³ His primal covenant with man is to provide him the refuge of His abiding Love. And when He is moved by His own compassion :

He does not ask even for the account of our actions¹⁴ He just saves!

He sanctifies the fallen (*patit pāwan*), for this is His covenant, He provides ready refuge to those who seek refuge (*śaraṇāgat*) in Him, He lifts up those that are drowning in the ocean of *saṁsāra*. He shows them, who are lost in the mazes of *māyā*, the path, He removes the fetters of delusion and illuminates the minds of men. He sets them free from the bondage of Karma, saves them from the pangs of Being, and provides them salvation. Millions and millions are saved by him in a trice.

It appears that the Sikh God justifies Himself by His love and not by His justice, for in His love inheres His justice. He doth ask man for the account of his actions, but is always more than ready to 'tear off this account.'

A God that is *nirvair(u)* then is (i) not jealous, and (ii) not vengeful; but is also in a positive way (iii) love and compassion par excellence.

This, however, raises a paradox : If He is love and compassion par excellence, how does He dispense justice? The paradox dissolves itself, if we can divest the Divine justice of the qualities of animal justice. Vengeance is animal justice. It asks eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. Divine justice, on the other hand, is not vengeful. It is *nirvair(u)*. Its language is not that of spite but one of benevolence. "The True love, whose language is immense love"¹⁵ dispenses true justice.

How does this immense love run the ethical system? It does so by binding man to God with the fear of loss of this immense love. This reverential fear (*nirmal bhau*) is, then the key to Sikh ethics. Man obeys, not because he is afraid of the wrath of a vengeful God, but because he is afraid to lose the immense love of the benevolent God. This reverential fear is, then, the symbol of God's love for man, as well as man's love for God. That is why, the Guru says :

Ye, he alone loveth the Lord,
In whose mind His Fear resideth.¹⁶

Here, this reverential fear must be distinguished from animal fear. Animal fear is the impulse to escape or run away. It is caused by danger

to physical self (life) or symbolic (self-esteem), to personal liberty and security or to beliefs and ideals. It stems from a sense of inadequacy (for if there is adequacy, anger, rather than fear, arises), it spells a lack of intellectual will and, when, intense, paralyses activity.

The animal "fear cannot be got rid of by personal effort, but only by the ego's absorption in a cause greater than its own interests. Absorption in any cause will rid the mind of some of its fears; but only absorption in the loving and knowing of the Divine good can rid it of all fear ... since nothing can be menace to the Divine Ground."¹⁷

In fact, this animal fear ceases as soon as one abides in the reverential fear of the Lord, for then one abides in His perpetual care and all insecurities, threats and frustrations cease. Thus : "One who is imbued with (reverential) fear, becomes fearless."¹⁸

This reverential fear, to repeat, is not fear of punishment by God. Again, it is not merely a transcendent fear, before a great impersonal mystery. It is the fear of the benevolent love of a personal God. This fear is generated, not because God is likely to withdraw His love, but because we might cease to deserve it.

Nirbhau, and *nirvair(u)* as Godhead's attributes, then, are the warp and woof of His moral nature; and from these stem the Moral Order in His creation.

One becometh like the One whom one serveth.¹⁹

As such, those who serve the *nirbhau* become fearless and those who serve the *nirvair(u)* lose all hostility, jealousy, hatred, vengefulness and spite. They abide in the love of the Lord and His creation and live in a way that they continue to deserve the great abundance of His Benevolent Love.

NOTES

- 1 Not only mortals, but even the dwellers of *swarga* are subject to this fear for "after they have expended the fruit of their good actions, they have to return to the mortal world again"—*Yajura Veda*.
- 2 ਪੁਡਿ ਨ ਸਜੇ ਪੁਡਿ ਨ ਢਰੇ ਪੁਡਿ ਨ ਦੇਵੈ ਲੇਇ॥

Gurū Granth, p. 53

- 3 ਸਗਲਿਆ ਭਉ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸਿਰਿ ਲੇਖੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਸਚੁ ਏਕੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 464
- 4 'Fears arise from otherness'—*Yajura Veda*.
- 5 ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਊਪਰਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ॥ ਕਉਣੁ ਡਰੈ ਡਰੁ ਕਿਸ ਕਾ ਹੋਇ॥
... ..
ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਹਦੁਰਿ॥ ਮੇਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸਦ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 842
- 6 ਡਰਪੈ ਧਰਤਿ ਅਕਾਸੁ ਨਖੁੜਾ ਸਿਰ ਊਪਰਿ ਅਮਰੁ ਕਰਾਰਾ॥
ਪਉਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ ਡਰਪੈ ਡਰਪੈ ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ॥
... ..
ਸਗਲ ਸਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਡਰਹਿ ਬਿਆਪੀ ਬਿਨੁ ਡਰ ਕਰਣੈਹਾਰਾ॥ *Ibid.*, pp. 998-99
- 7 (a) ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਉਤਪਤਿ॥ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 929
(A) ਡਰੁ ਰਾਖਿਆ ਗੁਰਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣਿ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 933
- 8 *The Holy Bible*, Exod. XXXIV, 14.
- 9 *Ibid.*, Deut. IX. 18-20.
- 10 *An Encyclopaedia of Religion*, (ed.), vergilius Fern.
- 11 ਮਿਠਬੋਲੜਾ ਜੀ ਹਰਿ ਸਜਣੁ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਮੇਰਾ॥
ਹਉ ਸੰਮਲਿ ਬਕੀ ਜੀ ਓਹੁ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਬੋਲੈ ਕਉਰਾ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 784
- 12 ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਨਿੰਦਸਿ ਕਾਇ ਭੂਲੀ ਗਵਾਰੀ
ਦੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਬਾਰ ਕਰਮੁ ਰੀ *Ibid.*, p. 695
- 13 ਬਾਹ ਪਕਰਿ ਕਾਢਿ ਲੀਨੇ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਅੰਧ ਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਮਾਇਆ॥ *Ibid.*, pp. 1218-19
- 14 ਤਾ ਕਾ ਲੇਖਾ ਨ ਗਨੈ ਜਗਦੀਸ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 277
- 15 ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚੁ ਨਾਇ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਭਾਉ ਅਪਾਰੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 2
- 16 ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨ ਮਨਿ ਭਉ ਤਿਨਾ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਉ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 465
- 17 Aldous Huxley, *Perennial Philosophy*, p. 187.
- 18 ਭੈ ਰਚਿ ਰਹੈ ਸੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਹੋਇ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 223
- 19 ਜੇਹਾ ਸੇਵੈ ਤੇਹੋ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੇ ਚਲੈ ਤਿਸੈ ਰਜਾਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 549

AKĀL MŪRAT(I)

(TIME AND REALITY IN SIKH PHILOSOPHY)

J.S. Ahluwalia

Sikhism has ushered in a qualitatively new mode of thought in the realm of religious philosophies of the world.

Before Guru Nanak, the first Prophet of Sikh religion, the Ultimate Reality was conceived as manifesting itself in the following four main ways: revelation in the word; immanence in space (nature); incarnation in the individual, human form; and dwelling in the self *qua* soul conceived as efflux of the Absolute. With Sikhism there emerges for the first time in the history of religious thought a new conception of God, descending in time (history) and determinating Himself out *qua* Spirit, in and through the collective form of society. The process which started with the descent of the Godhead in history, through the medium of Guruship of the Sikh Prophets, reached its culmination when Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last Prophet, while bestowing the spiritual aspect on the *Granth* conferred the temporal aspect of the Guruship on the collectivity of the followers of the new path of religion. In this way the *Granth* (the Holy Scripture) became the *Gurū Granth*, while the *Panth* was elevated to the level of *Gurū Panth*. *Khālsā Panth* whose collective societal form is the phenomenal expression of the supratemporal *God-Akāl Mūrat(i)*—in the dimension of time and history:

The Khalsa is My determinate form I am immanent in the Khalsa.¹
According to Prehlahd Rai:

This, verily, is the phenomenal form of time-transcending God,
The Transcendental has appeared in the collective body of the
Khalsa.²

The following lines, to the same effect, also occur in Prehlahd Rai's *Rahitnāmā*:

The *Panṭh* has been promulgated into being under the Divine commandment.

The Scripture be deemed as the spirit of the Gurū

Whose phenomenal form be prehended in the *Gurū Khālsā*.³

This new conception of God marks a qualitative change in the cognition of the Ultimate Reality from Being to Spirit. This evolutionary change, heralded by the Sikh metaphysics in the history of Indian religious thought, leads to a new conception of time.

The concept of Being (substance) involves the notion of uncreated, eternal, isotropic (spatial) time which according to Barrow, the teacher of Newton, is 'the continuance of anything in its own being.' On the other hand, the idea of Spirit partakes of an isotropic time, of which the conception of historical time as implied in the Sikh metaphysics is one form. The Vedantic thought (in its generic form) is essentially based on the cognition of the Ultimate Reality in *terms* of Being (substance) with its corresponding isotropic notion of time which divested of its essential temporality and historicity turns out to be a static, space like continuum in which the Ultimate Reality abides in its self-same unchanging state of being as substance. Individual soul as a microcosmic form or part of the Ultimate Reality is also conceived as "an abiding substance."⁴ The other words the Vedantic conception of the *Akāl* refers to the timelessness of the Ultimate Reality, that is, to its eternal, self-same state of *being* in the static continuum of time. This is contradistinguishable from the *gurbāṇī* concept of *akāl mūrat(i)* which refers to the *a priori* in-itself time-transcendence of God who *qua* Spirit descends in historical time.

The point is that the connotation of the term *akāl mūrat(i)*, can be properly understood only in the perspective of the Ultimate Reality as cognized by Sikhism, which is essentially a religion of Spirit, contradistinguishable from the pre-Nanakian religions and religious philosophies (Vedantic), which partake of the concept of Being (substance) as the Ultimate Reality.

Soon after its flowering, the Sikh movement got subjected to a process of feudalization, leading, inter alia, to vedanticization of the Sikh

thought. The resultant exegetical crisis caused an erosion of the metaphysical identity of the Sikh doctrine, which, as such, came to be looked upon, at the most, yet another species of the Vedantic genus. As the new social order envisioned in Sikhism was based on an ideational revolution brought about by Guru Nanak, so a denial of the latter under the Vedantic shadow inevitably led to liquefaction of the distinctive colours and contours of the Sikh value-pattern as also of the Sikh people as a nation.

The exegetical confusion is worse confounded by the fact that almost all of our Sikh scholars have only skin-deep acquaintance with the systematic thought of the East and of the West; thus they are easily led astray by the superficial terminological similarity between Sikhism and the pre-Nanakian thought-system, between *gurbāṇī* and the Upanishadic verses. No wonder then, that not a single Sikh interpreter has so far succeeded in projecting an integrated image of the Sikh doctrine as a logically consistent whole, weaving into an organic unity the social, ethical, political and metaphysical aspects of this religion of great World-historical significance.

The concept of *akāl mūrat(i)*, is the key-note of the Sikh *mūl mantra* the quintessence of the Sikh doctrine. But almost all of its traditional interpretations follow the Vedantic conception of time and reality. As such the entire *mūl mantra* is rendered in a vedanticized way. Take for instance "A Rending from the Jap(u)" by Prof. Gurbachan Singh Talib. Herein, Prof. Talib has rendered *sat(i) nām(u)* as "Reality Eternal." The opening passage of the *Jap(u)—ād(i) sach(u) jugād(i) sach(u)*—has been translated as under: "The Eternal, the Holy, ever was, ever shall be." Further, Prof. Talib refers to the 'eternity' of God in the sense of His 'immutability' in all time.⁵

With Prof. Talib and other scholars following the Vedantic tradition, timelessness of God means not a supra-temporal state but a quality of being eternal, that is, immutable in all time. Eternity, as a state of being (immutable) in time, is a category applicable to the Vedantic Ultimate Reality—Brahman *qua* Being (substance) and not to the Sikh conception of the Absolute *qua* spirit conceived as *akāl* in the sense of being supra-

temporal or time-transcendent. Herein lies the essential difference between the general Vedantic thought and the Sikh metaphysics. The former treats the Ultimate Reality as Being (substance) and the latter in the sense of the creative spirit, *karatā purakh(u)*. The Vedantic Brahman, accordingly, is conceived in terms of *sat*, *chit ānaid*, but the quality of being the Creator is not attributed to it. Further, Brahman here is *sat*, but not *sat(i) nām(u)* as it is in *gurbāṇī*. Brahman in Vedantic thought is *sat* (consciousness), but not “self-consciousness.”⁶ The above differentiation is essential for understanding the real, logically consistent connotations of the *mūl maṅtra* terms of metaphysical nature: *Ek oamkār sat(i) nām(u) kartā purakh(u)* and *akāl mūrat(i)*. The first term refers to the in-itself indeterminate essence of the Ultimate Reality which is supra-temporal *akāl mūrat(i)* vis-a-vis the realm of time and space created by the Absolute as the creative spirit *kartā purakh(u)*. The Absolute, through the creative act, becomes determinate Reality *sat(i) nām(u)* in the sense of determinate Infinity as against the abstract infinity given by the category of *Ek oamkār*. As it is in the creative act that the abstract Infinite becomes the determinate Infinite, so the created realm comes to be seen as a determination of the Absolute, which in the *gurbāṇī* idiom is called His Name:

All that He has created is His name.⁷

The Sanskrit word *sat*, like the English term being, refers neither to the ideal nor to the material aspect of reality; it rather connotes the logical aspect under which all that can be said is that the Real is. In their abstractness, the Vedantic (*nirguṇa*) Brahman (Being) and the Buddhist *śūnyatā* (Nothingness), tend to be indistinguishable from each other for the simple reason that when the Ultimate Reality is seen as excludent of all determinations, qualities, attributes and predicates, then, there remains no (epistemologic) way of distinguishing Being from Nothingness. As such though, epistemologically, there remains no determinate distinction between the Vedantic Brahman and the Buddhist *śūnyatā*, yet the former is posited in the logical aspect of ‘is-ness’. It is in this sense that in the monistic Vedantic thought, Brahman, while sharing its indeterminacy and abstractness with the Buddhist *śūnyata* is *sat* : Being-in-itself. It was to

emphasize such logical "beingness" (is-ness) of the (*nirguṇa-nirākār*) Absolute that Guru Nanak placed the numerical "ੴ" (as a sign of positivity) in contrast to the Buddhist negativity given by the term *sūnyatā* before the word "ੴ" to constitute the term "ੴ" (*Ek Oamkār*) to symbolize "beingness" (is-ness) of the Absolute, notwithstanding its abstractness and indeterminacy.

Having thus contradistinguished his doctrine from the Buddhist concept, Guru Nanak, then proceeds to differentiate it from the Vedantic Brahman, which is *sat* but not *sat(i) nām(u)*. In other words, Guru Nanak does not rest content merely with positing the logical being (*sat*) of the Ultimate Reality but goes on to make the indeterminate Absolute manifest itself as determinate Infinity, *sat(i) nām(u)*, in the creative act *qua* spirit.

Thus the term *sat(i) nām(u)* does not mean that "His name is Truth" or that "His Reality is Eternal". It would be much more appropriate to render it as : His Name (*qua* determinate Infinity) is True. It is in this sense that Guru Nanak says that all that God has created is his Name.

In other words, this term emphasizes the reality of the (relational) determinate aspect of the Absolute, as the expression "*Ek Oamkār*" stresses the in-itself indeterminacy and abstractness of the Absolute, the positivity (beingness) of which is simultaneously under-scored so as to contradistinguish this indeterminacy from the indeterminacy of the Buddhist *sūnyatā* (Nothingness).

Reality, as Pure Being (substance), devoid of all determinations, and qualities when approached idealistically takes, inter-alia, the form of the Platonic (abstract). Universal or the Vedantic Brahman. When seen materialistically the (abstract), substance turns out to be the empty substratum or the Kantian thing-in-itself. As such the determinate, phenomenal world of time and space is reduced to the Platonic appearance, the Vedantic maya or the Kantian projection of the (epistemic) mental forms of cognition on to the thing-in-itself. Existential reality comes to be seen in terms of nihilism or solipsism. Sociologically such an attitude towards the wordly reality ends up in a status-quoist value-pattern. When the Real is taken as the abstract Being, then for

man there can be no ideal other than that of getting rid of all the sensory content or the determinate characteristics that constitute the individuality of a person. The resultant abstract individual is then amenable to being subsumed under this or that type in a totalitarian system. The lopsidedness inherent in this approach and trend is corrected in a religion of the Absolute *qua* Spirit. In the Indian context the transition⁸ to a religion of spirit in the form of Sikhism corresponds to and involves a process of change heralding the postfeudal value-pattern. Such is the revolutionary role played by Sikhism in the history of Eastern civilization.

The counterpoising of the abstract reality to the determinate, concrete existence is due to the alleged non-identity of being and cognition, a notion challenged by Hegel in Western thought and by Guru Nanak in Indian metaphysics. With Hegel, the ontological process of the self-development of the abstract Idea into a determinate whole *qua* selfconscious Spirit, corresponds to the epistemologic process of the autogenesis of the concepts and categories of the Dialectic. In fact, with Hegel the two processes are just the two ways of looking at what essentially is one and the same process wherein the being and the cognition of the being sublate, that is, pass into each other.

In the Nanakian thought the identity of being and cognition is established in another way. It is in the creative act that the abstract Absolute manifests itself as determinate Being, as self-conscious Spirit; the created, existential reality turns out to be a determination, that is, a determinate predication ("Name") of the Absolute—a process in which what is cognized ("name"), is a determinate form of what is, The Real as such no more remains ineffable, beyond prehension or verbal description:

In Words weprehend God in His name

In Words we cognize Him, praise and predicate Him.⁹

Looked at from this angle the term *sat(i) nām(u)* implies the identity of being and cognition.

As mentioned above, it is in the creative act that the abstract Absolute becomes conscious of itself as Spirit; creation here covers not

only the existential reality but also time and space as the constitutive aspects of the created phenomena. This brings us to an analysis of the different conception of time in the context of which the concept of *akāl mūrat(i)* (timelessness of God) would reveal its connotation in Sikh Philosophy.

Ordinarily the concept of 'timelessness' is interpreted in the following ways:

First, a thing is said to be timeless when though in time it is not subject to or under the influence of time, that is, when it is not subject to the temporal processes or origination, development and disintegration. This in other words means that such a timeless thing has an essence, essential property, substance or substratum that does not change at all and remains in the self-same state of being, irrespective of its location in any temporal instant or duration (past, present, future) of time. Time might effect its non-essential, secondary characteristics or its external form but its essence remains uninfluenced by time. The Sankhya theory of timelessness in the continuum of which the transformation of A (milk) into \bar{A} (ghee or clarified butter) is only a change of form and not a change in the underlying substance which remains the same. The effect (\bar{A}) pre exists in the cause(A). The three casual *guṇas* inherent in the Sankhya *prakṛti* (substance) and subsisting in passive equilibrium give rise to the effect known in the form of the phenomenal world when the initial equilibrium is disturbed. What is potentially pre-given manifests itself in a changed form. Obviously, there is no new creation, no novel development, no real evolution, as these concepts imply change to be the innate characteristic of time, whereby to be in time would mean to be subject to change not only in form but in essence as well. But in the Sankhya *pariṇāmavāda*, what is potentially pre-given and pre-contained manifests itself out in a changed form. The same, *mutas mutandis*, applies to the Vedantic form of *pariṇāmavāda*. In *Brahman-pariṇāmavāda*, the *saguna* Brahman is only a changed form of the *nirguṇa* Brahman. Behind this secondary phenomenal form is the primary noumenal substance which alone is the Real (*Sat*) in the sense of eternal, timeless, ever-same Being in relation to which the world of *becoming* has either derivative reality or no reality at all.

In Indian thought the quality that remains eternal or unsublated is indicated by the traditional term *sat* which is not only determinate characteristic but is only the logical quality of 'is-ness' or substance (being). The substance or being so conceived to be eternal or timeless-in-time, whether considered idealistically (Vedantic Brahman) or materialistically (Newtonian) matter, implies an isotropic, ahistoricist conception of time called "spatial" by Bergson. Here, time is conceived as the space-like container of substance and partakes of all the qualities of space: homogeneity; infinity; continuity; uniformity; directionlessness; reversibility and casual inefficacy.

The characteristics of spatial time mentioned above flow from its homogeneity¹⁰, which means that all temporal instants and intervals are in every respect equivalent to and identical with one another. Hence no temporal instant can be said to be "before" or "after" any other instant. So there is no beginning, no end of time, which as such has to be conceived as uncreated. Time accordingly becomes infinite duration infinity. Further, if time admits of no internal differentiation *per se* in terms of "before" and "after", then the correlative concepts of succession, causation, change, origination, development, evolution, disintegration, etc. become meaningless and unreal. Hence the Real is that which remains eternal, that is, in the self-same state of being in infinite duration stretching from beginningless past to endless future.

As seen above the concept of eternity implies infinite duration of isotropic time. For a consistent monist viewpoint there cannot be three simultaneously existing infinitis : Brahman; infinite time and infinite space. So infinite time and infinite space must be deemed, as aspects or dimensions of the Ultimate Reality—Brahman. As the infinite time and infinite space are both devoid of "content", so their being the aspects of Brahman would not make the latter a determinate Being. Thus the Ultimate Reality having infinite time and infinite space as its aspects retains its abstractness as well as its timelessness, that is, its unchangeability. And by being so congruous with infinite time and infinite space, it comes to be seen as "immanent" in time and space.

The archetypal concepts and categories of Hindu thought, such as Karma, samsara, re-incarnation, *samādhi*, etc., partake of the isotropic, spatial conception of time.

As distinct and different from the *gurbāṇī* conception, karma, as envisaged in the *Karma* Yoga of the *Bhagvad Gītā* is “not action in time but action in Eternity”,¹¹ As regards the law of karma, says N.A. Nikam: “It is evolution through the infinites of space and time that is the field for the operation of the Law of Karma.”¹² Here, evolution does not mean real development, which is something more than displacement in passive time and space or a mere change of form. The Vedantic conception of change, of cosmological transformation, leading to the existential appearance of samsara, does not mean real change in the sense of an evolutionary process. The spatial nature of time implies that it is *per se* without any intrinsic direction-ality or reversible temporal sequence¹³ in terms of “before” and “after” of the precedent (cause) and the consequent (effect), of the lower and the higher stage in an evolutionary process. Accordingly the Hindu Law of karma (*qua* cosmological causation) entrails cyclical, reversible succession (*āvāgaman*) in which there can be a transition from “ascent” to descent” as much as from “descent” to “ascent”. This viewpoint stands in sharp contrast to the *gurbāṇī* conception which envisages an irreversible evolutionary process:

For several births you were just a worm
 For several births, an elephant, a fish, a deer,
 For several births, a bird, a serpent
 For several births served as a bull, a horse
 This is the moment of union with God
 Now that you have after ages evolved into the human form,
 For many ages you subsisted as a rock, a mountain.
 Many times destroyed in the womb.
 For countless time subjected to vegetative growth passing through
 myriads of species.
 Through communion with the Holy you arose into a man.
 Serve now the Lord, meditating on the Guru's Word.¹⁴

The evolutionary process proceeds beyond the material domain and comprehends the moral and spiritual development of man as stressed by Guru Nanak in his *Jap(u)* wherein five successive stages (*khaṇḍ*) are envisioned leading to the spiritual union of the seeker with God.

It is due to the reversibility of spatial time that the three *guṇas* can toll back into their original state of equilibrium in the Sankhya *prakṛti*—thus ending the samsara. Further, it is the reversibility (that is, the cyclical nature) of time that makes it possible for Hindu thought to go back in time to regain the paradise lost—*satyuga*— in its quest for the betterment of life, which, as such, does not remain a question of developing and evolving in the future new human and societal life-patterns.

The state of *samādhī* in which one could unaffectedly subsist for quite a large stretch of time is logically possible only on the basis of spatial notion of time in which it is conceivable to be timeless while in time.

The Buddhist theory of causation known as “dependent origination” (*paticca samupāda*) is also based on the spatial notion of time. The differentiation of instants of time in terms of “Before” and “after” being ruled out in spatial time, the cause and the effect, then, must be seen as occurring simultaneously. This is the very essence of the Buddhist “dependent origination”. Writes N.A. Nikam: “The peculiarity of the notion of Dependent Origination is that it presupposes the notion of simultaneous occurrence of cause and effect...”¹⁵ The peculiarity, in fact, is the peculiarity of the underlying spatial, ahistoricist view of time, it was owing to such a notion of time that the Buddhist phenomenalism, despite its rejection of the static category of substance (Being), could not result in the dynamic, historicist conception of reality but got evaporated in the concept of “Nothingness.”

Modern thought under the impact of the Relativity Physics has rejected the static, isotropic notion of time in favour of the an isotropic conception of time, that is, “asymmetry of time”¹⁶ involved in the dynamic, historicist view of reality. The Relativity Physics implies that no quality

of an object remains eternal in time as well as in space and further that an object derives its qualities from its location in the spatio-temporal continuum. Thus the essence of an object lies not in its so-called underlying changing substance (*sat*) but in its spatio-temporal relationships. This is how the correlative concepts of eternity and substance are knocked out. The concept of timelessness-in-time (the Vedantic *akāl*) which is the very core of Vedantic thought no more remains ontologically valid and logically tenable.

As against the Vedantic concept of "*akāl*" (timelessness) the Sikh *mūl mantra* concept of *akāl mūrat (i)* refers to the supra-temporal, time-transcendent nature of God. Now, time-transcendence is also conceived in many ways in speculative thought. The time-transcendence of the Ultimate Reality in the Kantian sense is different from what means in the Sikh thought. With Kant, the noumenal reality transcends time for the reason that time is an *a priori* form of mind external to the Real-in-itself.¹⁷ Time, here, is an aspect of the subjective apparatus of cognition and is not a form, mode dimension, condition or characteristic of the objective Being-in-itself which as such is timeless in the sense of being supra-temporal.

The *gurbāṇī* conception is closer to the Biblical thought in that it considers time to have begun with the creation of the existential reality. God as *kartā purakh(u)* created not only the world but also time as the mode or the constitutive aspect of the phenomenal reality:

God has created matter (mountains, and time (aeons)).¹⁸

Elsewhere it is said:

God has created all things, all being.

And day & night also.¹⁹

A number of corollaries follow from this "createdness" of time. Time is being created, the Creator must be prior to His creation both logically and historically as envisioned in Sikhism. In Hegelian thought this priority is only logical, because here what is meant by creation of B by A or development of B out of A means only that B is logically deducible from A. Dialectical development for Hegel means only a kind

of “deductive necessity”.²⁰ Time being a created phenomenon, it cannot be treated to be eternally “there”, either co-extensively or congruously with the Ultimate Reality. The durational infinity of time is also knocked out as the created time must be deemed to have a beginning.

In this context we can understand the real meanings of the terms *ād(i) sach(u)*, *jugād(i) sach(u)*, *hai bhī sach(u)* *Nānak hosī bhī sach(u)*²¹ refers to the *logical* priority of the (indeterminate) reality of the Absolute before creation of time, while the second term *jugād(i) sach(u)* indicates the *historical* priority of the (determinate) reality of Absolute *qua* Spirit in the beginning of time (aeon), that is in the historical past. The third and the fourth expressions refer to the reality of God in the present and the future respectively. Traditional interpretations rendering the terms *ād(i)* and *jugād(i)* as meaning one and the same thing (in-the -beginning of -time) have all failed to comprehend the distinction between the two concepts—one referring to the *logical* priority and the other to the *historical* priority of God. This distinction also reveals the “createdness” of time, that is, the nature of time with beginning, as against the eternal duration of the Vedantic time. Further, this significant distinction also provides a clue to the understanding of the Key-note concept of *akāl mūrat(i)*. God is supratemporal or time-transcendent in two senses. The *logical* priority given by the term *ād(i) sach(u)* refers to the time-transcendence of the Ultimate Reality, as indeterminate Being, while then historical priority is the time-transcendence of the Ultimate-qua-the-determinate-Being that descends in self-created time as spirit, ultimately becoming diffused into the collective form of society.

NOTES

- 1 ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਮਹਿ ਹੰਉ ਕਰਉ ਨਿਵਾਸ॥

Rahatnāme, (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, p. 158

- 2 ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਏਹਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿ ਅਕਾਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦੇਵ॥

Ibid., p.55

- 3 ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਸਿਉਂ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਚਲਾਯੋ ਪੰਥ॥

ਸਭ ਸਿੱਖਨ ਕੋ ਬਚਨ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨੀਅਹੁ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮਾਨੀਅਹਿ ਪਰਗਟ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ॥

Ibid

- 4 Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *What is Living and What is Dead in Indian Philosophy*, p. 511.

- 5 *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, February 1975, pp. 97-104.
- 6 Wilbur Long, "Religion in the Idealistic Tradition" included in *Religion in Philosophical and Cultural Perspective*, (eds.) J.C. Feaver and William Horosz, p. 32.
- 7 ਜੇਤਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇਤਾ ਨਾਉ . . . ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 4.
- 8 I have traced this transition in terms of dialectical methodology in my article "The Doctrinal Identity of Sikhism". *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, August 1974.
- 9 ਅਖਰੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਖਰੀ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਅਖਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਗੀਤ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਹ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 4.
- 10 Milic Capek, *The Philosophical Impact of Contemporary Physics*, pp. 38-49.
- 11 Juan Maascano, *The Bhagvad Gita*, p. 24.
- 12 N.A. Nikam, *Some Concepts of Indian Culture*, p. 33.
- 13 Writes Adolf Grunbaum: "Hence in our present temporally isotropic context, which excludes every kind of irreversible process, there is no objective physical basis for singling out one of two casually connected events as 'the' cause and the other as 'the' effect. For the designation of one of these events as 'the' cause depends on its being the earlier of the two and in the absence of the irreversible processes the latter characterization expresses not an objective physical relation substantiated by it but only the convention that a lower time number is assigned to it. By contrast in the context of irreversible processes the following results obtain: first, the relation term 'earlier than' names an objective physical relation between two states which is different from the converse objective relation named by 'later than' and second, the designation of one of two casually connected events as the cause of the other, names a physically different relational attribute from the one named by the converse designation 'the effect'.—*Philosophical Problems of Space and Time*, pp. 189-90.
- 14 ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਪੰਖੀ ਸਰਪ ਹੋਇਓ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਹੈਵਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਖ ਜੋਇਓ॥
ਮਿਲੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ॥ ਚਿਰੰਕਾਲ ਇਹ ਦੇਹ ਸੰਜਰੀਆ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸੈਲ ਗਿਰਿ ਕਰਿਆ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਰਭ ਹਿਰਿ ਖਰਿਆ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਪਾਇਆ॥ ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੋਨਿ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਇਆ॥
ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਿ ਭਇਓ ਜਨਮੁ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ॥ ਕਰਿ ਸੇਵਾ ਭਜੁ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ॥
Gurū Granth, p. 176
- 15 N.A. Nikam, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
- 16 Milic Capek, *op. cit.*, p. 160
- 17 Writes Kant: "For neither coexistence nor succession would ever come within our perception if the representation of time were not pre-supposed as underlying them *a priori*. Only on the pre-supposition of time can we represent to ourselves a number

of things as existing at one and the same time (simultaneously) or at different times (successively)— *Critique of Pure Reason*, (tr..) by N.K. Smith, p. 48.

18. ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸੈਲ ਜਗ ਭਏ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 929
19. ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਉਤਪਾਤੀ ਕੀਆ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਸਭ ਰਾਤੀ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1003
20. J.N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-examination*, p. 81
21. *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, August, 1974, p. 25.

AJŪNĪ

Jodh Singh

Macauliffe has translated *ajūnī*, an attribute of God, as 'unborn'. I beg to differ from him. *Ayoni*, the Sanskrit word, from which it is derived, means 'not born from the womb'. *Saibham* which he translated as 'self-existent', means 'unborn' by implication. I, therefore, take *ajūnī* to mean as 'one who does not take birth'. The Tenth Guru says :

If you call Rama '*ajoni*' and totally invincible,
Why was he born of the womb of Kaushalya?¹

Again, speaking of Shri Krishna, he says :

He is said to be from the beginning and *ajoni* ;
How did he come in the womb of Devaki?²

Guru Arjan Dev uses this word in the above-mentioned sense :

They, who sing lullaby³ incur all sins. May that mouth burn by
which it is uttered that the Lord has incarnated.⁴

But before we proceed further, it will be advantageous to learn when this doctrine of incarnation of God into human form originated and became part of the Hindu religion.

The deification of man is another feature of post-Vedic religion. Great heroes, considered as gods, came down to the earth as men for the protection of humanity, and were worshipped as gods in temples erected for them ... But there is no mention in the Vedas of gods coming down to earth as human beings. In post-Vedic Hinduism, god appeared also in the form of animals. There is Hanumat, the monkey god. There is Ganesh, the man-elephant god. The avatar doctrine associated with Vishnu is, however, a later development. There is only one avatar of Vishnu for which there is a trace in the Vedas. That is the Dwarf (*bāwan*), who measured

out the whole world in three steps. From the Vraha, which occurs in the Veda, commentators have tried to show that this is a reference to the Boar incarnation, but there is no basis for this interpretation. All the other avatars of Vishnu are extra-Vedic.⁵

Shri Bal Gangadhar Tilak also writes in his *Arctic Home in the Vedas* that Rama, too, like Tortoise and Fish avatars is a cosmic avatar and there is a reference to him in the *Rig Veda*,⁶ The avatar doctrine was, clearly enunciated by Lord Krishna.

Whenever there is decay of Dharma, O Arjuna, and there is exaltation of adharma,

Then I come forth myself, for the protection of the good

And for the destruction of the evil-doers. For the sake of firmly establishing Dharma, I am born from age to age.⁷

On page 105 of *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, Vol, I, 1st edition, the author of the chapter on *Mahābhārata* gives some reasons to justify the doctrine of avatar. As the doctrine (of bhakti) seeks to establish a personal relationship between the deity and the devotee, it not only invests the deity with a personality and an infinitude of attributes, but also emphasises divine grace on the one hand, and man's need of loving devotion, on the other. One of the greatest acts of divine graciousness to the world is God's coming to birthlessness by His own cosmic power of illusion (maya) and veiling His real nature by manifesting Himself as an individual at the time of the world's need. The doctrine of avatars or the periodical descent of god-head, which should be distinguished from the *vyuha* (व्यूह) doctrine, ignored in the *Gītā*, is generally acknowledged in the *Mahābhārata* but the fact of avatar in this work is probably a necessary corollary to its proposed identification of Krishna-Vasudeva with Bhagwat. The doctrine of repeated avatars was also necessary to connect him with earlier myths and legends. Krishna-Vasudeva is thus identified not only with Vishnu, the greatest-deity in the Epic as well as with his various forms and incarnations, but is also related to Shiva and Brahma and other gods of rival sects, who are subsumed under one supreme name. In this way, the doctrine attempts to establish

a unity of the godhead and tolerant scope. The *raison d'être* of the avatar doctrine, however, is found in the recognition of the supreme deity as the upholder of the moral order of the world, and in the conception of repeated descents for setting the world right. Looked from another point of view the doctrine implies the deification of the human, a belief in superior beings, who become the embodiment of the divine. It affords, therefore, tangible and effective divine ideals towards which imperfect men may strive and grow.

The reasons given to uphold the doctrine are very ingenious but has it, in practice, abolished sectarian gods ? The worshippers of Shiva, Kali, Durga and other gods and goddesses have not acknowledged any avatar of Vishnu as superior to their own god and the intended establishment of the unity of godhead has not been realised in practice. That god is the upholder of the moral order, is also believed by those religions who do not accept the doctrine of avatar. The shortcomings in the character and conduct of a human being, deified as an avatar rather nullify the assumption that he is the upholder of the moral order. The Kuru warriors dubbed some steps, taken by the Pandavas on the advice of Shri Krishna, as unrighteous. The Sikh Gurus have put before their followers a very high standard of ethical conduct without proclaiming themselves as avatars of Vishnu. On the other hand the Tenth Guru specifically proclaimed :

All those who call me God will go to hell.

Consider me His servant without any the least reservation.⁸

I think, belief in the avatar doctrine divided the Hindu masses into so many sects and they could not take a united action at the time of foreign attacks. The Arab tribes believed in various gods and were always fighting amongst themselves, but when under the leadership of Prophet Mohammed, they began to believe in one God without a second, *Wāhid-al-lā-sharik*, they became united and became a power in those times.

The Gurus, therefore, preached against the avatar doctrine and founded a community believing in *Ek Oamkār* and though they were small in numbers, challenged the mightiest power of their times to give up tyranny and bigotry. Guru Nanak calls the supreme reality '*ajūnī*'

i.e. 'birthless'. He emphasizes the same fact in *Āsā dī Vār*, where he says :

A woman is born of a woman, none is born without a woman.
Nanak, the One True Being alone is not born of her.⁹

At another place he says :

He has no father or mother.

He is born of none.

He has no form or features, nor does He belong to any of the *varanas*.

He feels no hunger or thirst.

He is ever satisfied.¹⁰

In the musical mode *Sorath(i)*, we come across the following verses of Guru Nanak :

Unknowable, infinite, unfathomable, incomprehensible,

Subject neither to death nor the law of Karma,

Belonging to no Caste,

Birthless, self-created, without attachment or delusion

I am a sacrifice to the True Being, everlasting.

He has no form, colour or features,

And is revealed only through the True Word.

He has no mother or father, no son, nor relatives, nor wife, nor lust.

Without a lineage, immaculate highest of the high.

Thy light pervadeth all.¹¹

Again, in the musical mode *Āsā*, he says :

Nanak, they who meditate on the everlasting Reality become immortal.

But they who worship those who died after being born are pursuing the falsest path.¹²

In the following hymn Guru Nanak argues that you call certain persons avatars because they destroyed a few demons. How can they equal the glory of God who created and destroyed countless gods and demons ?

He created air and brought together fire and water and placed

the earth in the midst.

The fool-hardy, ten-headed demon brought about his own destruction.

To call Him a slayer of Ravana does not add to His greatness.

How can I praise Thee ?

Thy devotees see Thee all-pervading.

He created all living beings and keeps them under His own control.

To say that He strung the nostrils of the serpent Kali does not make Him greater.

Thou art the husband of none, whom can we call thy wife ?

Thou pervadest all without a break,

Slaying of Kansa does not make Him bigger.

Brahma, who sprang out of the lotus (came out of the naval of Vishnu)

And was thus blessed,

Began to explore His creation.

He could not find its limits

Slaying of Kansa does not add to His Glory.

Guru Nanak says that in His Creation there is not one Brahma, but many, not one Krishna or Shiva but countless ones, so why worship His creatures ?¹³

I shall give a few other quotations from the *Gurū Granth* and *Dasam Granth* to corroborate the Guru's stand :

Many are the winds, water and fires, many Krishnas and Shivas.

Many are the Brahmans engaged in moulding forms of various shapes and colours.¹⁴

Nanak only the Formless is without fear. There are many Ramas as the dust of His feet, and

Many Krishnas ; and many are their life-stories.

Many are the speculations of the Vedas.¹⁵

One Shiva came and then died, another came again,

There are many avatars of Rama and Krishna,

Many there are Brahmas and Vishnus,

Many are the Vedas and the Puranas,

Many Smrities came into existence and perished.¹⁶

The Tenth Guru strongly criticised those who proclaimed themselves the Supreme Reality (Brahman) :

Put your faith in the Creator and not in the created.

Know Him to be the Supreme Lord who is from the beginning, birthless, and indestructible.

What if Vishnu came in the world and killed some demons,

Making a show of some power,

And had himself proclaimed as Brahman in this world.

How could He, who has the power to create and destroy, be measured ?

He could not ward off the attack of all-consuming death.

Listen, O fool ! How can he save you, who himself was drowned in the sea of births and deaths ?

Thou canst save thyself from the noose of death,

If thou takest refuge with the Lord of the universe.¹⁷

Only the Creator is deathless,

Who keeps creating and destroying from the beginning to the end,

And is of endless existence;

For whom praise and dispraise are the same

And who hath no friends or enemies.

What necessity compelled him to become the charioteer of Arjuna?

The Saviour, who has neither father nor mother and hath no children and grandchildren,

Why should he come in the world, to be called the son of Devaki?

He who hath created gods and demons and pervades all directions and corners,

To call Him the destroyer of the demon Mur is no praise for Him.¹⁸

The Tenth Guru further discards the avatar doctrine by pointing out that God is birthless and invincible. Rama Chandra was born out of the womb of Kaushalya and Krishna was defeated by Kalayaman, 'A King of Yavanas the enemy of Krishna and an invincible foe of the Yadavas. Krishna finding it impossible to vanquish him on the field of battle, cunningly decoyed him into the cave of sleeping Muchkunda who burnt him down with his looks.'

If, you say Rama is *ajoni*, why was he born of the womb of Kaushalya ?

Why was he, whom you call dark-coloured Krishna defeated by Kalayaman ?

If you call Him all goodness and without enmity, why did then he drive the chariot of Arjuna ?

Recognise only Him as your Lord, whose mysteries none has been or will be able to unravel.¹⁹

How do you call Krishna all merciful ? why did the hunter shoot him with an arrow ?

Why did he, who saves the families of others, have his own race destroyed ?

You call him primeval and birthless.

Why did Krishna come into the womb of Devaki ?

You say, he hath no father or mother,

Why then had he called Vasudeva his father ?²⁰

Why do you call Shiva your Lord ? why do you term Brahma your master ?

The Lord of Raghavas, the master of Yadavas and the husband of Rama (Vishnu), whom you consider as lords of the universe are not so.

Sukdev, Parasara and Vyas, who discarded one God and worshipped many, were duped.

All these dharmas are unprofitable,

I believe in One God who makes Himself manifest in many ways.²¹ Some put their faith in Brahma and others say Shiva is their Lord.

Some say Vishnu is the Lord of the universe, by worshipping whom all sins are washed off.

Ponder over it a thousand times, O dullard, they will all forsake these when the end cometh.

Meditate upon Him who was, is and ever shall be.²²

The word *ajūnī* applied to God, clearly denotes that He does not incarnate in human form and contradicts the avatar doctrine that formed part of the contemporary Hindu religion.

NOTES

- 1 ਜੋ ਕਹੈ ਰਾਮ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਅਜੈ ਅਤਿ ਕਾਰੇ ਕੋ ਕੋਸਲ ਕੁੱਖ ਜਯੋ ਜੂ॥ *Dasam Granth*, p. 713.
- 2 ਆਦਿ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਕਹਾਇ ਕਹੇ ਕਿਮ ਦੇਵਕਿ ਕੇ ਜਠਰੰਤਰ ਆਯੋ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 714.
- 3 On the birthday of Shri Krishna, the priests put his idol in a swing and sing lullabies.
- 4 ਸਗਲ ਪਰਾਧ ਦੇਹਿ ਲੋਰੋਨੀ॥
ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 1136.
- 5 Radhakrishnan, S., (ed.) *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, Vol. I, p. 35.
- 6 *Viśva Jyoti*, a monthly magazine of the Visheshvarananda Institute, Hoshiarpur, however, in its *Rāmāyan Āṅk* for April-May, 1971, quotes a mantra of the *Rig Veda* containing the name of Rama on page 115 :
प्रतददुः शीमे पृथगाने वेने प्र रामे वोचमसुरे मघवत्सु ।। *Rig Veda*, X. 93. 14

and the author of the article says that according to Chintamani Vinayak Vaidya's opinion "Rama mentioned in the Rig Veda Mandala 10 is the Rama son of Dashratha. Some scholars state that this Mandala was composed in B.C. 1500. Shri Lokmanya

Tilak, the most learned scholar of the Vedic Lore, places its composition in 4000 B.C.”

- 7 ਧਦਾ ਧਦਾ ਹਿ ਧਰ੍ਮਸ੍ਯ ਗਲਾਨਿਰ੍ਥੰਗਿ ਭਾਰਤ ।।
ਅਘ੍ਰਿਯੁਥਾਨਸਧਰ੍ਮਸ੍ਯ ਤਦਾਤ੍ਮਾਨੰ ਸ੍ਰ੍ਯਾਮ੍ਧ੍ਯਹ੍ਸ੍ ।
ਧਰਿਤ੍ਰਾਯਾਧ ਸਾਖ੍ਰ੍ਯਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਨਾਸ਼ਾਧ ਚ ਦੁਃਕ੍ਰੁਤਾਸ੍ ।।
ਧਰ੍ਮਸੰਸਥਾਪਨਾਥਾਧਿ ਸੰਭਗਸਿ ਧ੍ਰੁਗੇ-ਧ੍ਰੁਗੇ ।। *Bhagvad Gītā*, IV. 7 - 8.
- 8 ਜੇ ਹਮ ਕੇ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਉਚਰਿ ਹੈ॥ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਨਰਕਿ ਕੁੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਿ ਹੈ॥
ਮੇਕੇ ਦਾਸੁ ਤਵਨ ਕਾ ਜਾਨੇ॥ ਯਾ ਮੈ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਰੰਚ ਪਛਾਨੇ॥ *Dasam Granth*, p. 57.
- 9 ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੈ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ॥ *Gurū Granth*., p. 473.
- 10 ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਾਪੁ ਨ ਮਾਇ ਕਿਨਿ ਤੂ ਜਾਇਆ॥
ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨਾ ਰੇਖ ਵਰਨ ਸਬਾਇਆ॥
ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭੂਖ ਪਿਆਸ ਰਜਾ ਧਾਇਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1279.
- 11 ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰ ਅਗੰਮ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਕਾਲੁ ਨ ਕਰਮਾ॥
ਜਾਤਿ ਅਜਾਤਿ ਅਜੇਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਉ ਨ ਭਰਮਾ॥
ਸਾਚੇ ਸਚਿਆਰ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਕੁਰਬਾਣੁ॥
ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਰੂਪ ਵਰਨੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੇਖਿਆ ਸਾਚੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥
ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਸੁਤ ਬੰਧਨ ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਕਾਮੁ ਨ ਨਾਰੀ॥
ਅਕੁਲ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਅਪਰ ਪਰੰਪਰੁ ਸਗਲੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ॥2॥ *Ibid.*, p. 597.
- 12 ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਇਨਿ ਸਚੁ॥ ਜੇ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮੇ ਸੁ ਕਚੁ ਨਿਕਚੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 463.
- 13 ਪਉਣੁ ਉਪਾਇ ਧਰੀ ਸਭ ਧਰਤੀ ਜਲ ਅਗਨੀ ਕਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਕੀਆ॥
ਅੰਧੁਲੈ ਦਹਸਿਰਿ ਮੂੰਡੁ ਕਟਾਇਆ ਰਾਵਣੁ ਮਾਰਿ ਕਿਆ ਵਡਾ ਭਇਆ॥
ਕਿਆ ਉਪਮਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਖੀ ਜਾਇ॥
ਤੂੰ ਸਰਬੇ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥
ਜੀਅ ਉਪਾਇ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਹਥਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਕਾਲੀ ਨਥਿ ਕਿਆ ਵਡਾ ਭਇਆ॥
ਕਿਸ ਤੂ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਜੇਰੁ ਕਉਣ ਕਹੀਐ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ॥
ਨਾਲਿ ਕੁਟੰਬੁ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਰਦਾਤਾ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਭਾਲਣ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਗਇਆ॥
ਆਗੈ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਕੰਸੁ ਛੇਦਿ ਕਿਆ ਵਡਾ ਭਇਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 350.
- 14 ਕੇਤੇ ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਵੈਸੰਤਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕਾਨ ਮਹੇਸ॥
ਕੇਤੇ ਬਰਮੇ ਘਾਤਤਿ ਘਤੀਅਹਿ ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਕੇ ਵੇਸ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

- 15 ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੋਰਿ ਕੋਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਰਵਾਲ॥
ਕੋਤੀਆ ਕੰਨ੍ਹ ਕਹਾਣੀਆ ਕੋਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 464.
- 16 ਏਕ ਸਿਵ ਭਏ ਏਕ ਗਏ ਏਕ ਫੇਰ ਭਏ ਰਾਮਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨ ਕੇ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਭੀ ਅਨੇਕ ਹੈ॥
ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਅਰੁ ਬਿਸਨ ਕੋਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਔ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਕੋਤੇ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਮੂਹਨ ਕੈ ਹੁਇ ਹੁਇ ਬਿਤਏ ਹੈ॥
Dasam Granth, p. 18.
- 17 ਬਿਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨ ਕਿਰਤਮ ਮਾਨੇ॥
ਆਦਿ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਅਜੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਤਿਹ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਜਾਨੈ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥
ਕਹਾ ਭਯੋ ਜੋ ਆਨਿ ਜਗਤ ਮੈ ਦਸਕ ਅਸੁਰ ਹਰਿ ਘਾਏ॥
ਅਧਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਪੰਚ ਦਿਖਾਇ ਸਭਨ ਕੱਠ ਆਪਹਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਕਹਾਏ॥੧॥
ਭੰਜਨ ਗੜਨ ਸਮਰਥ ਸਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸੋ ਕਿਮ ਜਾਤਿ ਗਿਨਾਯੋ॥
ਤਾਤੇ ਸਰਬ ਕਾਲ ਕੇ ਅਸਿ ਕੋ ਘਾਇ ਬਚਾਇ ਨ ਆਯੋ॥
ਕੈਸੇ ਤੋਹਿ ਤਾਰ ਹੈ ਸੁਨਿ ਜਤ ਆਪ ਡੁਬੜੇ ਭਵਸਾਗਰ॥
ਛੁਟਿਹੋ ਕਾਲ ਫਾਸ ਤੇ ਤਬਹੀ ਗਹੇ ਸਰਨਿ ਜਗਤਾਗਰ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 710.
- 18 ਕੇਵਲ ਕਾਲਣੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ॥
ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤ ਅਨੰਤਿ ਮੂਰਤ ਗੜਨ ਭੰਜਨਹਾਰ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥...
ਕਉਨੁ ਬਾਟ ਪਰੀ ਤਿਸੈ ਪਬ ਸਾਰਥੀ ਰਥ ਹੋਇ॥
ਤਾਤ ਮਾਤ ਨ ਜਾਤ ਜਾਕਰ ਪੁਤ੍ਰੁ ਪੋਤ੍ਰੁ ਮੁਕੰਦ॥
ਕਉਨ ਕਾਜ ਕਹਾਹਿਗੇ ਤੇ ਆਨਿ ਦੇਵਕਿ ਨੰਦ॥
ਦੇਵ ਦੈਤ ਦਿਸਾ ਵਿਸਾ ਜਿਹ ਕੀਨ ਸਰਬ ਪਸਾਰ॥
ਕਉਨ ਉਪਮਾ ਤੋਨ ਕੋ ਮੁਖ ਲੇਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਮੁਰਾਰ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 711.
- 19 ਜੋ ਕਹੈ ਰਾਮ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਅਜੈ ਅਤਿ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਕੋਸਲ ਕੁਖ ਜਯੋ ਜੂ॥
ਕਾਲਹੂ ਕਾਨ ਕਹੈ ਜਿਹਿ ਕੋ ਕਿਹਿ ਕਾਰਣ ਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਦੀਨ ਭਯੋ ਜੂ॥
ਸੰਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਬਿਬੈਰ ਕਹਾਇ ਸੁ ਕੜੋ ਪਬ ਕੋ ਰਥ ਹਾਂਕ ਧਯੋ ਜੂ॥
ਤਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ ਜਿਹ ਕੋ ਕੋਉ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਲੇਨ ਲਯੋ ਜੂ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 713.
- 20 ਕੜੋ ਕਹੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧਿ ਹੈ ਕਿਹ ਕਾਜ ਤੇ ਬੱਧਕ ਬਾਣੁ ਲਗਾਯੋ॥
ਅਉਰ ਕੁਲੀਨ ਉਧਾਰਤ ਜੋ ਕਿਹ ਤੇ ਅਪਨੋ ਕੁਲ ਨਾਸੁ ਕਰਾਯੋ॥
ਆਦਿ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਕਹਾਇ ਕਹੋ ਕਿਮ ਦੇਵਕਿ ਕੋ ਜਨੁਰੰਤਰ ਆਯੋ॥
ਤਾਤ ਨ ਮਾਤ ਕਹੈ ਜਿਹ ਕੋ ਤਿਹ ਕੜੋ ਬਸੁਦੇਵਹਿ ਬਾਪੁ ਕਹਾਯੋ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 714.
- 21 ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਮਹੇਸਹਿ ਭਾਖਤ ਕਾਹਿ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਬਖਾਨੜੋ॥

ਹੈ ਨ ਰਘੁਸ ਜਦ੍ਰੇਸ ਰਮਾਪਤਿ ਤੈ ਜਿਨ ਕੋ ਬਿਸੁਨਾਥ ਪਛਾਨੇ॥

ਏਕ ਕੋ ਛਾਡਿ ਅਨੇਕ ਭਜੈ ਸੁਕਦੇਵ ਪਰਾਸਰ ਬਯਾਸ ਝੁਠਾਨੇ॥

ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਸਜੇ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਹਮ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੋ ਬਿਧ ਨੈਕ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨੇ॥

Ibid.

22. ਕੇਉ ਦਿਜੇਸ ਕੋ ਮਾਨਤ ਹੈ ਅਰੁ ਕੇਉ ਮਹੇਸ ਕੋ ਏਸ ਬਤੈ ਹੈ॥

ਕੇਉ ਕਹੈ ਬਿਸਨੋ ਬਿਸਨਾਇਕ ਜਾਹਿ ਭਜੇ ਅਘ ਓਘ ਕਟੈ ਹੈ॥

ਬਾਰ ਹਜਾਰ ਬਿਚਾਰ ਅਰੇ ਜੜ ਅੰਤ ਸਮੇ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਤਜਿ ਜੈ ਹੈ॥

ਤਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਧਾਯਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਨਿ ਹੀਏ ਜੇਉ ਬੇ ਅਬ ਹੈ ਅਰੁ ਆਗੈ ਉ ਹੈ॥

Ibid.

SAIBHAM

Jagjit Singh Saluja

Scholars present divergent views about the derivation and interpretation of the word 'saibham'. Some of them think that 'saibham' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'svayambhū' which means 'self-existent'. There are others who hold the view that 'saibham' is to be derived from *svabhā*¹ or *svayambhā*² meaning 'self-lighted', 'Self-radiant' or 'Self luminous' or an 'embodiment of light' as Bhai Vir Singh would like us to believe.³ The former view, in my opinion, is more cogent and logical and gets support from within the corpus of the *Gurū Granth*. It is difficult to agree with Bhai Vir Singh that the whole word 'saibham' is equivalent to 'svayam' and also that 'bham' is a derivative from 'bhā' meaning 'light'. 'Svayam' (originally a nominative case of 'sva', formed like 'aham', means self, one's self or by one's self, spontaneously, voluntarily, of one's own accord."⁴ Only the first half of 'saibham', i.e. 'sai' is from *svayam* or the shorter form *sva* which means 'own', 'of one's own seed or cause'. With 'sva' as prefix we have words like *sva-tantra* (self-dependent), *sva-pūrṇa* (perfect), *sva-prakāśa* (self-luminous), *sva-sāra* (pouring out spontaneously), etc.⁵ The second part of the word, *bham* is from 'bhu' which means 'to be', 'becoming', 'existing'.⁶ Another very important point worth consideration is that 'svayambhū' has an equivalent in 'svāyambhuva' (Self-existent i.e. Brahma).⁷ Here the ending 'ū' of 'bhū' changing into 'va' of 'bhuva' is very significant for finding the correct derivation of *saibham*. No where in the hymns of the *Gurū Granth*, *saibham* has been used as *saibhā* but it has frequently been used as *sambho*, *sambhau* and *sambhaviau*⁸ as variation of *svayambhū*, or *saibham*. These different forms of *saibham* have terminals 'u' and 'au' which are indicative of the letter 'v'. In Sanskrit two sounds of 'u', followed by 'a' result into 'v' and *bha* never changes into 'o', 'u', 'v' or 'au' or nasalization. Hence *saibham*, is from 'svayambhū'; *sambho* from

ambhava / 'svayambhu'; *sambhau* from *svambhava* and *sambhviau* is past participle of 'svamī + bhu bhava'. Guru Gobind Singh has very frequently used the word *svayambhav* which is still closer to *svambhū* and there it means 'Self-existent'.⁹

From amongst the traditional interpreters of *gurbāṇī*, Giani Uttam Singh has presented the most appropriate interpretation of this word. Taking it as derivation of *svayambhu*, he writes that *saibham* is that which comes into existence from His own Self, i.e. He is self-existent. He does not need any body's help to come into existence. He is unique.¹⁰

In Sanskrit literature, we find *svayambhū* used in different shades, *svā-bhū* (in masculine form) meaning 'self-existent', has been used in *Rāmpūrvatopaniṣad* and *Āpastmbha Śrauta-Sutra*. It has been used as the name of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in *Bhāgavata Purāṇā*.¹¹ Its variants '*sva sambhava*' (being one's own origin or source), '*sva-sambhuta*' (produced from one's own self) and '*sva-bhāvā*' (Self-existent or existing spontaneously) have also been used. In *Māhābhārata*, and *Harivaṃśa Pūraṇa*, 'Manu svayambhuva' stands for the First Manu, the son of *Svayambhūve*—the Self-existent, Brahma.¹² 'Manu svayambhuva' was the first of the traditional Manus and is believed to be the first ruler of the earth.

In the beginning was Brahma, the self-existent one, who divided himself into two parts, male and female, Putusha and Viraj, and from this duality of Brahma came Manusvayambhuva. It was from Brahma manifested as Manu Svayambhuva that all the *prajāpatis*, *mahārishis*, and other mind-born sons of Brahma were begotten.¹³

Besides Brahma, it has also been used for Shiva, Kal and Kamdeva.¹⁴ '*Svayambhū*' has most significantly been used in *Isopaniṣad*, *Bṛihadāranyakopaniṣad*, *Kathopaniṣad* and *Taittiriyaopaniṣad*, where it has been used to signify the Self-Existing God. To quote only a few examples :

- (i). It is He that has gone abroad (*paryagāt*). That which is bright (*śukra*), bodyless (*akāya*), without scar of imperfection (*avraṇa*), without sinews (*asnāvira*), pure (*śuddh*), unpierced by evil (*aparpiddham*). The Seer (*kavi*), the Thinker (*miniṣi*), the One

who becomes available everywhere (*paribhū*), the Self-existent (*svambhū*) has ordered objects perfectly according to their nature from years sempiternal.¹⁵

- (ii). Brahma is the Self-existent (*svayambhū*). Adoration to Brahma.¹⁶
- (iii). The Self-existent (*svayambhū*) pierced the openings (of the senses outward; therefore one looks outward, not within himself (*aṅtarātmā*)).¹⁷

In the *mūl mantra* and also in the hymns of *Gurū Granth*, '*saiibham*' has always been used as an epithet for the Supreme Reality and in every context it conveys the idea of the Self-existence of the Absolute Reality. It has never been used for the first Manu, the Brahma, Shiva, Kal or Kamdeva, Guru Nanak Dev did use the contemporary vocabulary of Indian religious literature but he did so with amended or extended connotations. The use of the word '*saibham*' confirms the 'Self-existence' of one Indivisible Absolute Being (*Ek Oamkār*, which is the basic theme of the *mūl mantra* and also to the *Gurū Granth*). In fact all the epithets in the *mūl mantra* are intimately connected, each supplementing the idea expressed in the preceding one. The idea of unicity is cardinal and runs through all the remaining epithets. The one Eternal Being is Really Existent and manifests Himself through the spirit of *nām*. He not only creates the Universes but pervades and preserves them also (through Divine Law). Being free from strifes and contradictions, He represents and exhibits perfect harmony and tranquility. He is above and beyond Time, Space and finite forms, all being His creation. Hence there can be no question of His birth or incarnation. The use of word '*ajūni*' repudiates and rejects the Hindu concept of representing God through idols and avatars. The Guru reprimands those who say, "God came to earth as human being."¹⁸

The averment that the Supreme Being is '*ajūni*' poses a significant question : 'If He is not incarnate, how does He come into existence?' '*Saibham*' which epithet is just next to '*ajūni*', dispels the doubt and appropriately affirms that the one Eternal Being is Self-existent. He comes into Being from Him ownself. It is important to note that in many texts

of the *Gurū Granth, ajūnī* and *'saibham'* have been used consecutively, one supplementing the sense of the other :

- (i). Unattached is He, Unincarnate (not cast into womb), Self existent.¹⁹
- (ii). Thou art the Being Eternal Unincarnate, Self-born.²⁰
- (iii). He is the one whose very Sight is Fruitful, Unincarnate, Self-Existent. The Being beyond Time, Indestructible, Eternal, Deathless and Unperceivable.²¹
- (iv). Thou art the Being Eternal,
Beyond Time and finite forms;
Not incarnated, Self-existent,

You are the only Light to illumine the Darkness of *Kali-yuga*.²²

Of all the attributes of One Universal Being (*Ekaomkār*), enunciated in the *mūl mantra*, the main stress has been on the Reality, Existence and Eternity of the Supreme Being, which qualities are corresponding and inter-related. Only really-existent, *sat(i)*, (Skt, *satya*) can be eternal and that which really exists, exists of His Own Being, independent of any cause or external force (*saibham*). The eternal self-existence of the real is reaffirmed in the first *sloka* the opening of *Jap(u)*. "He ever was existent before the Creation of Time, really-existent is He during the span of *yugās*, He alone is really-existent and Eternal and He alone shall ever be so."²³

The same idea is stressed again in the XXVII stanza of *Jap(u)*. He alone is the real, immutable Lord, eternal His greatness and Real His manifestation. The Creator, ever-existent is, shall be and never shall He not be.²⁴ In the closing lines of stanzas XXVIII, XXIX, XXX and XXXI, of the *Jap(u)* Guru Nanak Dev reiterates that the self-existent Reality is primal, *'ād(i)'*, immaculate, *'anil(u)'*, eternal *anād(i)*, immortal *'anāhat(i)'* and immutable through and beyond all time *'jugu jugu eko ves(u)'*. Guru Nanak's God abides in the Realm of Eternity. All the other attributes of the One Supreme Being (*Ekaomkār*) enunciated in the *mūl mantra* and reiterated elsewhere in *gurbāṇī*, present different facets of the eternal, independent, self-existing reality. In the fifth and sixth words of the *mūl mantra*, it has already been mooted that He is the only Creator (*Kartā-*

Purakh). The supreme power is not *śunya* (void) it is a conscious self-existing Reality which creates, preserves, evolves, devolves and is the source of all manifestation, and manifestation is possible only when the Reality exists, that which does not exist can never bring anything into existence. This self-existing Reality is the ground and support of all that exists in the cosmos. He has created the world according to His free will. This Divine will of the existent reality orders, sustains, governs and rules over all that has been created :

Everything emerges from His One Word, Flowing out like a multitude of rivers.²⁵

He alone is the Master and the Ruler.²⁶

The impossibility of existence from non-existence has been discussed in some of the Upanishads : One becomes as the unexisting, if he knows the Eternal as negation; but if one knows of the Eternal that He is, Then men know him for the same and the one reality. In the beginning, all this Universe was Non-Existence and Unmanifest from which this manifest Existence was born. If itself created itself, (*svayamā-kuruta*). Therefore, they say of it the well and beautifully made (*sukṛta*).²⁷

How this Being came into existence, has further been made abundantly clear in *Chhādogyopaniṣad*, wherein the idea of 'svayambhū' has also been elucidated : In the beginning, my dear, this world was just Being (*sat*), one only, without a second. To be sure, some people say, 'In the beginning this world was just non-being (*asat*), one only, without a second; from that non-being, being was produced'. But verily, my dear, 'whence could this be ?' said he. "How from non-being could Being be produced ? On the contrary, my dear, in the beginning this world was just Being. One only, without a second".²⁸

This 'Self-Existent' Reality is Absolute and Supreme and does not depend upon any other force for His existence. Besides Him, nothing else in this cosmos is self-dependent or self-existent. The existence of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva is also dependent upon Him. Even

time is not eternal. Time emerges synchronously with creation. All the created things are limited in time and space. They come into existence, as an effect of some other cause, live for a while and pass out of existence. Thus flowers bud, bloom and wither; trees grow, flourish, and fall; men are born and die; rivers flow and dry up; the earth has its origin and will have its end; and the same is true of the solar system. But whatever can come into and pass out of existence is contingent. There is nothing in its own nature which requires its perpetual existence, or which makes its non-existence impossible.²⁹

In other words nothing in this world is self-explanatory or self-existent. We have to seek the accountability of things in 'something else', through which they come into existence. This 'something else', through which they come into existence. This 'something else' is again not self-explanatory, but dependent upon 'something else' and so on, till we come to something which is self-explanatory, self-existent and self-dependent, of the nature of which full account can be given and which is such that it exists in and through itself, which is neither born nor dies and this is what has been conveyed in '*Ajūni Saibham*'. The Self-existence of God is an affirmation of His Absolute nature, beyond which this human understanding cannot proceed:

Innumerable are God's qualities,
 Endless their count.
 Innumerable His doings, His bounty...
 None Knows His limit—
 The more it is expressed the farther it recedes
 He is the Supreme Master.
 Exalted His station; Supreme above all is
 His Name.
 Only one as exalted as Himself might
 know His extent.
 To Him alone is His extent known:
 Devotion to Him is a blessing,
 Coming through His glance of grace.³⁰

The hypothesis of the existence of the Supreme Reality cannot be verified in the ordinary empirical way, still there have been attempts to prove the existence of God. Some philosophers have advanced arguments to prove this existence, which others assert that God's existence can be known directly through intuitive knowledge and divine revelation. Guru Nanak Dev's belief in the self-existence of God is not based on arguments but upon deep mystical experience. He saw God face to face and stood witness to it.

The main arguments, advanced by the thinkers, to prove the existence of God are Ontological, Teleological, Cosmological and Substantial. We shall take up these in brief. Ontological argument, as advanced by St. Anslem, advocates that God is a being than whom nothing greater can be conceived, "for the being of God from the idea which is both in *intellectū et in re* is more perfect as an idea than that which is in *intellectu solo*".³¹ One cannot think of nothing; to think of nothing would be not to think of anything. According to this argument, whatever we think of, is real, otherwise we cannot think of it. We think of the existence of God, and hence, He exists. Bacon advocated the idea of natural teleology which attributes final cause to everything. It asserts that every natural thing is governed by indwelling form, working towards a definite end and the whole nature exhibits a grand design, which involves a designer or, in other words, the existence of God. Cosmological argument asserts:

that an entity which is not Self-explanatory can be accounted for neither in terms of another entity which is not Self-explanatory not in the terms of another entity which is not Self-explanatory not in the terms of a whole series of such entities, be that series finite or infinite in length.³²

Acquinas puts forth the idea of existence of the Prime Mover, the Causeless Cause of all the causes and effects. For him God is the first and the ultimate cause. There is nothing in this world without a cause. The impulse to seek causes is innate in the soul of man. To find causes of every existence, including the existence of God, is an inveterate human tendency. The question, "how and why things come into existence?"

remains unsolved because there are secrets which man cannot fathom. One event leads to another, one 'why' to another 'why' and that yet to another and the mystery remains unsolved. Describes observes "that regress to infinity (of cause and effect) is absurd unless you at the same time show that the world has a definite beginning in time". For Hume man can have no real knowledge of how causes really produce their effects. The real causes are hidden. What we discover as cause and effect is in reality succession of events, one following another. The only answer to infinite regress of cause and effect is the Causeless Cause, the First and the ultimate Cause, the Self-Existent Reality. Lock argues, (that what had its Being and Beginning from another, must also have all that which is in, and belongs to its Being, from another too. All the Powers it has, must be owing to, and received from the same source. This eternal Source then of all Being must also be Source and Origin of all Power and so this eternal Being must also be most powerful.

Descartes enunciates the idea of Self-existing, Infinite, all powerful one and unique Being on the basis of the presence of a clear and distinct idea of a thinking, uncreated and independent substance, which is naturally innate within the human mind. If we investigate the cause of the existence of such an idea within us, we are led to posit a being who is possessed of all the attributes which attend our own idea of him: (When we think more attentively of God, we soon find that the non-existence of God is, strictly speaking, Unthinkable. Our innate idea of God is that of Supreme perfect being, since existence is a perfection, is to think of a supremely perfect being to whom some perfection is wanting, which is contradictory. Hence existence is inseparable from God and, consequently, He necessarily is, or exists.³³ Descartes' God was not simply a pure act of existing, with no cause for His own existence, He was like infinite energy of self-existence which was to itself the cause of its own existence. The description of Self-existing God is not possible since a cause naturally appears to be distinct from its effect and it appears strange to say that. He was His own cause. yet, could we bring the two notions of cause and

effect to (coincide), at least in this unique case, an infinitely powerful Self-causing Being would perhaps be the least inadequate of all the human approximation of God.³⁴

This is how the idea of self-existent Reality (*Saibham*) has, inadvertently, been justified by Descartes. Guru Nanak Dev did not support his 'vision' by any of the arguments-teleological or ontological. His observations are outcome of his deep mystic contemplation. His is the testimony of any eye-witness. The idea of Self Existent Absolute Reality is inter-spersed throughout his writings and there cannot be any better interpretation of what the Guru has said him self about His Being and existence:

(i) Neither is He installed (in forms) Nor fashioned.

The Immaculate is Self-existent.³⁵

(ii) Neither is He born, nor does He die, He is Eternally Existing in and by Himself.³⁶

NOTES

- 1 *Santhyā Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib*, Vol. I, p. 30.
- 2 Muni Hari Prasad, *Jap Samhitā*, p. 79.
- 3 *Santhyā Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib*, loc. cit.
- 4 M. Monier Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 1278.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 1275-77.
- 6 Suryakanta, *Sanskrit-Hindi-English Dictionary*, p. 433.
- 7 M. Monier Williams, *op.cit.*, p. 1284.
- 8 *Gurū Granth*, pp. 99, 916, 1042, 1082, 1397, 1407.
- 9 (a) ਸਰਬ ਬਿਸ੍ਵ ਰਚਿਓ ਸੁਖਿਭਵ ਗੜਨ ਭੰਜਨ ਹਾਰ॥ *Dasam Granth*, p. 5
 (b) ਸੁਖਿਭਵ ਸੁਭੰ ਸਰਬਦਾ ਸਰਬ ਜੁਗਤੇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 10
- 10 *Gurū Dhaṇḍorā Japu*, p. 13.
- 11 M. Monier Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 1283.
- 12 V.S. Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 1020.
- 13 Benjamin Walker, *Hindu World*, Vol. II, p. 467.

- 14 Ram Chandra Verma, *Sanṅkṣipta Hindi Śabda Sāgar*, p. 1047.
- 15 *Īsopaniṣad*, 8, (Tr. by Sri Aurobindo, *The Upanishads*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1972).
- 16 *Bṛihadāraṇyakopniṣhad*. 2.6.3. (Tr.) Robert Ernest Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣhads*, p. 363.
- 17 *Kathopanishad* 4. 1. Tr. Hume, op. cit., p. 353.
- 18 ਸੇ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 1136
- 19 ਆਪਿ ਅਤੀਤੁ ਅਜੋਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ...॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1042
- 20 ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭੋ...॥ *Ibid.*, p. 99
- 21 ਅਮੋਘ ਦਰਸਨ ਆਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ॥
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਕਦੇ ਨਾਹੀ ਖਉ॥
ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਅਬਿਗਤ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੁਝ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਲਗਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1082
- 22 ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ਕਲਿ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦੀਪਾਈ॥ *Ibid.*
- 23 ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1
- 24 ਸੋਈ ਸੋਈ ਸਦਾ ਸਚੁ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਚੀ ਨਾਈ॥
ਹੈ ਭੀ ਹੋਸੀ ਜਾਇ ਨ ਜਾਸੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਰਚਾਈ॥ *Ibid.*
- 25 ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੇ ਕਵਾਉ॥
ਤਿਸਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਅਉ॥ *Ibid.*
- 26 ਸੋ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਸਾਹਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹਿਬ...॥ *Ibid.*
- 27 *Taittiriyaopaniṣad*, 2. 6, 2. 7. *Ibid.*
- 28 *Chhāndogyaopaniṣad*, 6.2. 1; 6.2.2. (Tr.) Hume, op. cit., p. 241.
- 29 Robert Leet Patterson, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 126.
- 30 ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਸਿਫਤੀ ਕਹਣਿ ਨ ਅੰਤੁ॥ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਕਰਣੈ ਦੇਣਿ ਨ ਅੰਤੁ॥
ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਵੇਖਣਿ ਸੁਣਣਿ ਨ ਅੰਤੁ॥ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਕਿਆ ਮਨ ਮੰਤੁ॥
ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਕੀਤਾ ਆਕਾਰੁ॥ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ॥
ਅੰਤੁ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਬਿਲਲਾਹਿ॥ ਤਾ ਕੇ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਏ ਜਾਹਿ॥
ਏਹੁ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ॥ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਕਹੀਐ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਹੋਇ॥
ਵਡਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਊਚਾ ਥਾਉ॥ ਊਚੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਊਚਾ ਨਾਉ॥
ਏਵਡੁ ਊਚਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਕੋਇ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਊਚੇ ਕਉ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਇ॥

ਜੇਵਡੁ ਆਪਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪਿ ਆਪਿ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਕਰਮੀ ਦਾਤਿ॥

Gurū Granth, p. 5.

Tr. by Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Jap(u) Ji*, p. 54.

31 *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol, 2, p. 455.

32 R.L. Patterson, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

33 Descartes, *Meditations*, V, quoted by, E. Gilson *God. and Pilosophy*, pp. 83-84.

34 E. Gilson, *op. cit.*, p. 85

35 ਬਾਪਿਆ ਨਾ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ॥

ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਸੋਇ॥

Gurū Granth, p. 2

36 ਨਾ ਇਹੁ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਨਾ ਇਹੁ ਜਾਇ॥

ਆਦਿ ਜੁਗਾਦੀ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ॥

Ibid., p. 868.

GURPRASĀD(I)

Trilochan Singh

The *mūl mantra* is ancient in its symbolic, linguistic and theological form; it is modern in its philosophical content and mystical suggestions; it is eternal in spirit and theme. Like the *kalimā* in Islam, it explains completely the theistic position of the Sikhs. In marvellously terse and comprehensive words, the *mūl mantra* sums up the theistic concept of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, defines the relation of God to His creation, and suggests pointedly that His Light is unveiled to the world by the Guru, the Divine Teacher, having a perfect vision of God and living, eternally and completely, in communion with god. The *mūl mantra* is the essence of Guru Nanak's metaphysical and mystical doctrines. The meaning is as deep and profound as it is pithy and brief. The whole of *Jap(u)* is actually a commentary on the *mūl mantra*.

Guru Nanak, the author of this remarkable Invocation and sacred Text, was born in a region which had given birth to the earliest Book of Wisdom, the *Rig Veda*. It is the region where the Buddhists assembled at the place now known as Jullundur City, to sort out and edit the earliest Buddhist scriptures, soon after the death of the Buddha. It is the region where the Nathpanthi Yogis and other Shaiva cults were powerful religious forces and there were about 30 Shaiva centres in Jullundur alone. It is the region where Islam took early roots, and where the first great classic of Sufism, *Kasf-al-Mahjūb*, was written by Sheikh Ali Hujwiri, known to the Punjabis as Data Ganj Bakhsh. It is the region where the first great Indian Sufi, Sheikh Farid radiated such wisdom and light that Guru Nanak identified his faith and philosophy of divine sacrifice and love with the profound God-illuminated doctrines of the Sheikh and preserved his otherwise Islamic

Sufi literature as an indispensable part of the Sikh Scripture. It was in this region or in the neighbouring regions of Kashmir and Himachal, that Hindu thought ranging from monotheism to crude forms of polytheism triumphed or fell. Although there was a sharp and healthy development towards idealistic philosophy and monotheism in the medieval period, the polytheistic conceptions were too deeply in the Indian consciousness to be easily overthrown. Great seers like Shankaracharya, although determined *advaitists* (non-dualists), could not give up belief in gods and goddesses, much less dare to give up formal worship of the idols and images of these gods and goddesses. In such a world, the historical reality of which we have conveniently forgotten because we have a notorious reputation for utter lack of historical consciousness, Guru Nanak was born, fully conscious of the philosophical and cultural forces that had taken deep roots in the intellectual soil of the land. It is for this reason that the wise Guru expressed his metaphysical and mystic faith in the universally accepted terminology of Indian philosophical traditions.

The *mūl mantra* settles once for all the perennial dispute between the *advaitists* (non-dualists) and *dvaitists* (dualists) and other schools professing various complicated concepts of theism. It clarifies the relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, between God and the world, and between God and world-values. It also throws light on the modern philosophical concepts of Essence and Being, and above all it tells us in clear terms how this supreme, mysterious, self-existent, unknown God is Revealed to Man.

I have said that the whole of *Jap(u)* is the interpretation of the *mūl mantra*. The first three words of the *mūl mantra* are *ek, oamkār, sat(i)*. The first three words of the opening *salok* of *Jap(u)* are: *ād(i) sach(u), jugād(i) sach(u), hai bhī sach(u)*¹... i.e. the Truth Absolute (*ekaṁ*), the Truth All Pervading (*oamkār*) and the Truth that Exists as Living Spirit—*sat(i) nām(u)*. The *mūl mantra* ends with the revelation of God's Light through 'the Guru's Grace—*gur prasād(i)* and the *Jap(u)* ends with the *karam khaṇḍ* and *sach khaṇḍ* (the Realm of Grace and the Realm of Truth) both placed significantly in the same *paurī* (stanza) because they are inseparable from each other. In the

last two times of the last *paurī* (stanza), the words for grace occur four times:

Jin kau nadar(i) (grace) *karam(u)*/(grace)/*tin kār*.

Nānak nadrī (through grace) *nadar(i)* (in grace) *nihāl*.²

The first four *paurīs* are a commentary on the quest of *sat(i) nām(u)*. The path of intellectualism, fasting, and silence is of no avail. This quest for *sat(i) nām(u)*, (also called *sach nāu*), is a *sādhanā*, a practical way of contemplation and deep meditation through which communion with God is attained:

In the ambrosial hours of fragrant dawn,

Think upon and glorify.

His Name and greatness.

Our own past actions,

Have put this garment on us,

But liberation comes only through His grace.³

The fifth *paurī* is a commentary on the concept of Guru. In the Guru are seen all godheads and deities. Through him is revealed the visible oneness of God, and it is the Guru who reveals that man should never forget the real sustainer of life, God:

The Guru has unravelled one mystery,

There is but one Truth, one Bestower of Sustenance,

May I never forget Him.⁴

The Guru is revealed as Transcendent and Immanent Spirit. The four stanzas of *suñiai* and the four stanzas of *mañnai* are the stages of *sādhanā* (meditation and contemplative discipline) well-known in the Indian mystical traditions as *śravaṇ* and *manan*, ending in the perfection *pañch-parvāṇ*, the Enlightened Elect. Even in stanza 34, the Divine presence or court of God is described as one in which reside with Him the Enlightened Elect (*Pañch parvāṇ*):

God is True and His court is Truth dispensed,

There the Enlightened Elect live in communion with Him.

And in His grace and in His mercy,

They are honoured in His presence.⁵

God as *karatā purakh(u)* (Creative Being) is revealed in a number of stanzas ending with profoundly mystical verses. '*kudrat(i) kavaṇ kahā vīchār*'. He sings of His infiniteness. His self-existence, His omnipotence, His immeasurableness, His manifestations, and the failure of humanity to grasp Him. In the language of the Sufis he says, '*kudrat(i) kavaṇ kahā vīchār, ...tū sadā salāmat(i). nirañkār*'.⁶ In the language of the Yogis he says, '*ādes(u) tisai ādes(u) ād(i) anil(u) anād(i) anāhat(i)*'.⁷ In the language of the *darśanāchāryās* he says, '*giān khaṇḍ mah(i) giān(u) parchaṇḍ(u)*'.⁸ Every line, every word is an interpretation of the Creative Being, whose attributes are brought out in the light of human creation and moral and spiritual values. The concept of Grace dominates all verses from stanza 32 to the last *salok*. The mystic revelation of his faith is mapped out from *ek om sat(i)* to *gur prasād(i)* in the *mūl mantra* while the stages of mystic journey of the disciplined seeker, is wonderfully revealed in the five *khaṇḍ*s (realms or states of consciousness) [Like the *m'arifāt* of the Sufis and the Gnosis of the Greek Mystics, direct knowledge of God is based on inner revelation of Divine Light. It is not the result of mental process, but depends entirely on the will and favour of God, who bestows it as a gift from Himself upon those whom he has created with the capacity for receiving it. It is a light of divine grace that flashes into the heart and over-whelms every human faculty with its dazzling beams.

Before I take up the interpretation of *gur prasād(i)*, I consider it necessary to give what I feel to be the correct interpretation of *ek-oamkār*.

Interpretation of *Ek Oamkār*:

Classical Sikh theologians like Bhai Mani Singh, and even digressive interpreters like Meharban Mina were correct and unanimous in the interpretations of this concept. But our modern interpreters have so over-simplified it and given such slipshod meaning, devoid of its theological and philosophic content, that even a lay reader begins to wonder why the great Guru used symbolic expression to express such simple and plain idea.

Prof. Sahib Singh in his *Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib Darpaṇ* explain it simply as that entity which is one, like which there is none, and in which the whole world is absorbed.⁹ Dr. Taran Singh and S. Narain Singh in their *Gurū Nānak Bāṇī Prakāś*, simplify it still further into One attributeless God. Like Prof. Sahib Singh, they also take it to be one concept and more or less an abstruse expression of the statement—"there is one God". Prof. Sohan Singh in his scholarly work—*The Seekers' Path*, also takes it to be one concept and explains it as "One Universal Being". Bhai Vir Singh makes a very scholarly study. His approach is historical. He gives as many views as he has been able to collect, and argues thoroughly. His etymological analysis is correct, but he shuns the theological and philosophic concepts. We will now give the interpretation in the light of what *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Mani Singh and *Dasam Granth* have said about it. They are all clear and unanimous. To be brief we will first sum up the thesis and then substantiate it with examples from all the original sources.

The word 'ek' is written as a numeral in the invocational *mantram* but never so in the text. In the text it is written as, *ek, ekam, eko ekas, ikat, ekya*. The numeral, therefore, stands for *ekam* in the text. That is the first point to be noted. The word 'O' (ॐ) with its cap open is written as such only in the invocational *mantram*. In the text it is written as either *om* or *oamkār*. The suffix *kār* is only a term used in designating a letter or a sound or an indeclineable word. It does not mean visible expanse as Prof. Sohan Singh suggests. The suffix is *kār* and not *akār* as taken and interpreted by Prof. Sohan Singh. The suffix *kār* and the word *kār* has the following meanings in Sanskrit and it is used in all these various cannotations in *gurbāṇī* but when it is suffixed to *om* or *ekam*, it simply designates a sound. Other meanings are : (1) making, doing, working, a maker, a doer; (2) an act, action, (3) effort, exertion, (4) determination religious, austerity; (5) a husband, lord, master.

ekam

om

ekam+kār

om+kār

ekamkār

The Absolute

omkār

The Immanent Spirit.

Thus *ekamkār* and *omkār* (*oamkār*) are two different metaphysical concepts. This is very clearly stated by Bhai Gurdas who says:

*Ekamkār(u) ikāṅg likh(i) ūrā oamkār(u) lakhāiyā.*¹⁰

After putting *ekāṅg* (one) as the symbol of *ekamkār*, *ūrā* (ੴ) was placed by its side to symbolize *omkār*. I have interpreted *ekamkār* as the Absolute Self-Existent, and *oamkār*, the Creation of this *ekmīkār*. From *oamkār* emerged three entities, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the Triplicates of the phenomenal world, out of which arose the whole material and human world with all its nature, culture and civilizations. As this is not the main subject of my paper, I will briefly substantiate my statement:

Ekamkār (The Absolute)

Ekam ekamkār(u) nirālā.

Amar(u) ajonī jāt(i) na jālā.

*Agam agochar(u) rūp(u) na rekhiā.*¹¹

*Ekamkār(u) avar(u) nahī dūjā. . .*¹²

*Ekamkār(u) niranjan(u) nirbhau. . .*¹³

Oamkār (The Immanent Spirit, the Mother Spirit of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva).

From *Oamkār* was created Brahma

Who contemplated *Oamkār*

From *Oamkār* were created Space and Time

From *Oamkār* was created all knowledge.¹⁴

From *Oamkār* creation emerged,

And night and day were created.¹⁵

Relation between *Ekamkār* and *Oamkār*

Bhai Gurdas:

(At the time of Creation) the Formless one assumed and infinite Being to be designated *ekamkār*. From *ekamkār* emerged *elan vital*, the creative sound (*sabad dhun*) called *oamkār* , a

manifestation of His Spirit. From the one *oamkār* were born three divine spirits, *devas*, and from the three were created ten *avatāras*.¹⁶

Guru Gobind Singh, *Dasam Granth* :

When the Supreme Being
Created the Universe
It is from *Oamkār*
He created the World¹⁷
First god, the Father of all Created infinite Light.
He uttered the divine word:
Oamkār , from which divine Music
The world manifested,
And *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* were differentiated.¹⁸

Both Bhai Gurdas and Guru Gobind Singh make it clear that the one absolute (*ekamkār*) breathed the Infinite word (called *kavāo* in the *Jap(u)*, and this *vāk* or *kavāo* is called *dhun* (Divine Melody) by Guru Gobind Singh. Out of it various creative agencies and powers were created. In the *Jap(u)*, Guru Nanak sums up the whole of the cosmological theory in the words:

All Creative manifestations were done
Out of Divine Utterance (*Oamkār*)
And from it flowed millions of rivers of creation.¹⁹

The positive conclusions of this discussion are: (1) *ekāṅg* (i.e the numeral one) and *Oamkār* are two different concepts standing respectively for the Transcendent, Self-Existent Being and the Immanent, All Prevading spirit. The first is the Supreme and Absolute Being and the second is the creation out of His own Spirit. They are not one and the same but stand for two metaphysical Truths, which are fundamental to Sikh Cosmology. The understanding of these metaphysical Truth, is vital for understanding the concept of *gur prasād(i)*.

Two concepts in *Gurprasād(i)*:

The whole of the *mūl maṅitra* from *ekāṅg* to *ajūnī saibham* is about the Transcendent and Immanent God and His attributes. The word

gurprasād(i) introduces two new concepts, which are inseparable from God but are not attributes of God. They are added to the *mūl mantra* because they are absolutely essential for the revelation of God. But the two words are together because Grace, by the divine command of God, is the prerogative of the Guru. Unfortunately even these two vital concepts of Sikh philosophy have also been over-simplified.

The Concept of Guru:

Great artists, thinkers, philosophers and prophets pick up common words from the common man's language and give them meanings and significance of their own, which grow and develop into a doctrine, a theme and a profound concept. The word '*messiah*' was originally derived from *masiha*, an Arabic word (Heb. *Māshiah*) which simply means 'anointed'. By being anointed with oil, one was dedicated to God and given special status. In the Punjab the bride entering her new home was anointed with oil. The Day of my rendezvous is fixed: Pour oil on the threshold, my mates.²⁰ In a metaphorical sense the patriarchs and prophets were called the anointed, because they were equipped in a special manner with the spirit of God to be instrument of divine will. Then the word '*messiha*' began to be used for messenger of God upon whom God conferred the three offices of king, prophet and priest. In the same way, Guru Nanak picked up the concept of "Guru". In Hindu lore it is used for a Brahmin, Sanyasi, Yogic teacher and even a school teacher. In Sikhism it is used in its etymological sense, and has been given a profound meaning and significance. The word '*gu*' means darkness and '*ru*' means light. Guru is the dispeller of darkness of ignorance. This is the etymology given by Bhai Mani Singh. The '*Guru*' in Sikhism is the perfect messenger of God, in whom the Light of God shines fully, visibly and completely. He is not God, but like God; he is perfect, sinless and divine. All are apt to be deluded, but not so the Guru God.²¹ The mysteries of God are known either to God or to the Guru. But knoweth only He his own state, or the perfect Guru'.²² To distinguish the Guru from the false gurus, he is called the *satigurū*, the true Guru. The *satigurū* is the true instrument of His will and is commissioned by God to reveal His Truth

to humanity. God revealed Himself in the most extraordinary manner, clearly and perfectly to the Guru and the Guru revealed Himself to humanity. God calls the Guru His son, His image and His own Self.²³ The Guru in all humility calls himself His servant, His bard, His devotee. The Guru is the light that shines in darkness and his is the true light that enlightens every body:

In the Guru He has installed His own Spirit
Through him God reveals Himself.²⁴
The True Guru reveals the Truth
It is a wealth which is priceless.²⁵

The seed of divine light is there in every heart and every soul. It remains hidden to our intellect and earthly eyes, but God reveals it to man through his inspiration and magnetic touch:

The One eternal Light resideth in the body
The perfect and true Guru Reveals it through the word.²⁶

On account of his divine prerogative and attributes the Guru, though human in form, is godly and divine in spirit. God speaks to humanity through him. God enlightens the seekers of truth through him and his word. The Guru of History has something much more than the historical activities attributed to him. The Guru of the Scriptures is an eternally living being having three personalities, as Guru Gobind Singh tells Bhai Nand Lal:

*Tin rūp hañ moh ke suno Nañd chit lāi.
Nirgun sargun gurū sabad kahoñ tohī samjhāi.*²⁷

Nirguṇa, attributeless, the Light which is eternally God and represents God's Being in pure form. It is because of the consummate perfection, that God is in the Guru and the Guru is in God.

The Guru Manifest historically. The Guru became manifest not only in his individual personality but also in the *sādh saṅgat*. *Ek Sikh doe sādḥ saṅgat pañjīñ parmeśwar*. As far back as the time of Guru Arjan, the Guru sometime delegated this authority to five illumined Sikhs. This democratising process was complete by Guru Gobind Singh about whom

Gurdas, the second, says “*Gur saṅgat kinī Khālsā.*” Only perfectly illumined Sikhs were entitled to form *sādh saṅgat*. A congregation of evil people even gathered in a temple is called *hajūm-e-bad*.

The Guru as *sabad* (Word) : When Guru Nanak was asked by the Yogis in regard to his Guru, he replied, “The word (*śabad*) is my Guru.” God has anointed him with His word, His Wisdom (Logos) has illumined his being so perfectly that the Guru’s inner personality was now the word (*Śabad*) personified :

With the beginning of the breath of life,
My system also began.
The true Guru is the Word (*Śabad*)
And human consciousness is the disciple.
What keepeth me in my detachment
Is meditation on the Ungraspable One,
Through the one Divine Word.²⁸

Even during their life-time, the Sikh Gurus insisted that their human body was not the Guru but the Light of the Word that shines in them was their real personality. whoever sought Light from them must approach them mentally and spiritually with the spirit of dedication. Bhai Gurdas has said, “In the Word is the Guru and the Guru is the Word”.

He who imbibes the wisdom of Guru blends mentally and spiritually with the Guru²⁹ (*sat(i)gur kī jis no mat(i) āvai, so sat(i)gur māh(i) sumānā*). God has merged His Light in the personality of the Guru, and has revealed Himself through the Guru’s Word.³⁰ Without the Guru, enlightenment and liberation from the bondage are not possible.

Grace :

The word ‘grace’ is the key note of Sikh faith. It is called *prasād(i)*, *nadar*, *mehar*, *bakhśiś*, *kirpā*, *dayā daiā* and love. Grace is not a divine favour shown by God arbitrarily. While worship is the love of Man for God, grace is the love of God for Man. Bhai Gurdas says that we should not think that God bestows His grace only on the pious and the religious, or the wise and the pure. God bestows His grace on all, on some it is small on others it is great. The Grace of Guru is the response of the

Master of the love of God. It is the gift of His love, Bhai Gurdas says that if the disciple goes one step towards the Guru, the Guru comes a million steps to meet and bless the disciple. This is grace, God himself is the source of grace but grace come to humanity from Him through the Guru. The unbounded generosity and mercy of God is grace. God's love is always creative and spontaneous. His goodness overflows in blessings gifts. The Guru gives grace to sanctify us, to assure us our personal enlightenment. Grace is opposite of law just as mercy is opposite of justice. The Gurus did not believe in the ethics of law but in the ethics of love and grace, in the ethics of forgiveness and compassion. Grace is free and loving choice of God. It is His response to men's search for truth and reality.

Man has many gifts. He can achieve much by his efforts. In the natural sphere of life he achieves many great insights. But there is only a limited sphere in which he can achieve much through his own will-power. But beyond the frontiers of human efforts, there is a sphere in which God Almighty, or His sovereign Spirit, the Guru, can guide our steps. He alone can give us an insight which our unaided intellect can never comprehend. He alone can inspire us with a longing ambition which man can never achieve by his own powers. In this way God links up man's sphere of life with His own divine sphere through the Guru's grace. Grace is the result of this longing activity of God and Guru within us, which ennobles and enriches us. Grace thus opens the gates to participation in divine existence. Some people measure the grace of God with the amount of wealth they can amass by hook or crook. Some people measure the grace of God by the high position they acquire, no matter how low they have to stoop morally and spiritually, to get it. Such demoralising material benefits acquired, more often than not by corrupt and indecent methods, are not signs of grace. They actually move away from God, and the material benefits they acquire are more of a curse than grace. Actually grace leads a man into a state of abiding friendship with God and it is called sanctifying grace, *nadri nadar nihāl*. It confirms him in that state and progressively promotes a closer participation in the divine life. This life of grace is perfected in the of beautific vision. In the

Jap(u), the word 'grace' is stressed again and again. There is no morality without grace. there is no spiritual elevation without His grace. It is through His grace that God begins to reveal His Light to man :

Gurparasādī āp(u) pachhāṇai kamal(u) bigasai budh(i) tāhā he...

*Gur kirpā te ghaṭ aṅtar(i) vasiā sabade sach(u) sālāhā he.*³¹

Through the Guru's grace the Self is realized, through his grace the lotus of the heart blooms and his light shines within. Through His grace He becomes a visible presence within one's heart and is revealed within the soul as a living light.

NOTES

- 1 ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ...॥ *Gurū Granth p. 1.*
- 2 ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰਮੁ ਤਿਨ ਕਾਰ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ॥ *Ibid., p.8*
- 3 ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥ ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ॥ *Ibid., p. 2*
- 4 ਗੁਰਾ ਇਕ ਦੇਹਿ ਬੁਝਾਈ॥ ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਸੇ ਮੈ ਵਿਸਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ॥ *Ibid.*
- 5 ਸਚਾ ਆਪਿ ਸਚਾ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ॥ ਤਿਥੈ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪੰਚ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ॥ *Ibid., p. 7*
- 6 ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਵਣ ਕਹਾ ਵੀਚਾਰ॥
... ..
ਤੂ ਸਦਾ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ॥ *Ibid., p.3*
- 7 ਆਦੇਸੁ ਤਿਸੈ ਆਦੇਸੁ॥ ਆਦਿ ਅਨੀਲੁ ਅਨਾਦਿ ਅਨਾਹਤਿ...॥ *Ibid., p. 7*
- 8 ਗਿਆਨ ਖੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਪਰਚੰਡੁ॥ *Ibid.*
- 9 ਉਹ ਹਸਤੀ ਜੋ ਇੱਕ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਵਰਗਾ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਜਗਤ ਸਮਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। *Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib Darpaṇ, p. 44.*
- 10 ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਇਕਾਂਗ ਲਿਖਿ ਉਤਾ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ ਲਖਾਇਆ॥ *Vārāṇ Bhāi Gurdās, 39, 1*
- 11 ਏਕਮ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਿਰਾਲ॥ ਅਮਰੁ ਅਜੇਨੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਲਾ॥
ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖਿਆ॥ *Gurū Granth p. 838*
- 12 ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਦੂਜਾ...॥ *Ibid., p. 930*
- 13 ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ...॥ *Ibid., p.916*
- 14 ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਉਤਪਤਿ॥ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ॥
ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸੈਲ ਜੁਗ ਭਏ... ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਉਧਰੇ॥ *Ibid., pp. 929-30*
- 16 ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਆਕਾਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ ਸਦਾਇਆ॥
ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਸਬਦ ਧੁਨਿ ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਅਕਾਰੁ ਬਣਾਇਆ॥
ਇਕਦੂ ਹੋਏ ਤਿਨਿ ਦੇਵ ਤਿਹੁ ਮਿਲਿ ਦਸ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਗਣਾਇਆ॥ *Vārāṇ Bhāi Gurdās 26/2*

- 17 ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮ ਕਾਲ ਜਬ ਕਰਾ ਪਸਾਰਾ॥ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਤੇ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਸਾਰਾ॥ *Dasam Granth* p. 47
- 18 ਪ੍ਰਥਮ ਕਾਲ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਕੇ ਤਾਤਾ॥ ਤਾਤੇ ਭਯੋ ਤੇਜ ਬਿਖੜਾਤਾ॥...
ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮੇ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਤਿਨ ਕਹਾ॥ ਸੋ ਧੁਨ ਪੂਰ ਜਗਤ ਮੈ ਰਹਾ॥
ਤਾ ਤੇ ਜਗਤ ਭਯੋ ਬਿਸਥਾਰਾ॥ ਪੁਰਖ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਜਬ ਦੁਹੂ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 158
- 19 ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੇ ਕਵਾਉ॥ ਤਿਸਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਅਉ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 3
- 20 ਸੰਬਤਿ ਸਾਹਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਿ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਤੇਲੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 12
- 21 ਭੁਲਣ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਅਭੁਲੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 61
- 22 ਕਰਤੇ ਕੀ ਮਿਤੀ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੈ ਜਾਣੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 930
- 23 ਮੈਂ ਅਪਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਤੋਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ॥ *Dasam Granth*, p. 57
- 24 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਪ੍ਰੁ ਰਖਿਓਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 466
- 25 ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ ਇਸੁ ਧਨ ਕੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਕਹੀ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1092
- 26 ਏਕਾ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸਰੀਰਾ॥ ਸਬਦਿ ਦਿਖਾਏ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 125
- 27 ਤੀਨ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਮੋਹ ਕੇ ਸੁਨੋ ਨੰਦ ਚਿਤ ਲਾਇ।
ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਸਰਗੁਣ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਬਦ ਕਹੋਂ ਤੋਹਿ ਸਮਝਾਇ।
Bhai Kahn Singh, Gurmat Sudhākar, p. 261
- 28 ਪਵਨ ਅਰੰਭੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਲਾ॥ ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ॥
ਅਕਥ ਕਥਾ ਲੇ ਰਹਉ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੁਗਿ ਜੁਗਿ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਪਾਲਾ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 943
- 29 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕੀ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਮਤਿ ਆਵੈ ਸੋ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਨਾ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 797
- 30 ਗੁਰ ਮਹਿ ਆਪ ਸਮੋਇ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1270
- 31 ਗੁਰਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਕਮਲੁ ਬਿਗਸੈ ਬੁਧਿ ਤਾਹਾ ਹੇ॥
...
ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਤੇ ਘਟ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸਬਦੇ ਸਚੁ ਸਾਲਾਹਾ ਹੇ॥ *Ibid.*, pp. 1056-57

THE INFLUENCE OF *MŪL MANTRA* ON *GURBĀNĪ*

Taran Singh

Once, Guru Gobind Singh, with one foot in the stirrup of his blue steed, like king Janaka, asked if any Sikh could recite the whole of the *Gurū Granth* to him, before he got astride his horse. To the surprise of all, one Sikh who understood the mind of the Guru, came forward and uttered : *ek oamkār sat(i) guru prasād(i)*. Meanwhile, the Guru had, mounted the horse, The Guru rejoicingly blessed the Sikh and agreed that basic teaching of the *Gurū Granth* was *ek oamkār sat(i) guru prasād(i)* only, while the entire volume was the exposition of this fundamental doctrine. Thus an axiom grew that the rest of the text of the *mūl mantra* expounds the *ek oamkār* and the entire body of the *Gurū Granth* gives exposition of the doctrines propounded in the *mūl mantra*. Perhaps, it is for this very reason that every chapter (*Rāga*) and each 'Canto' or 'Passage' (a block of hymns in the *Rāga*) is superimposed by the *mūl mantra* text, complete or abridged.

(2) The originality of the Sikh philosophy or teaching lies in the 'composition' or the integrated form of the *mūl mantra* which has seven distinct parts (may be, fourteen parts, as some would believe). Considered separately, one by one, each of the seven principles of the mantra has been preached and discussed elsewhere, in Indian and non-Indian religious literatures; but considered as an integrated composition the principles or doctrines of *mūl mantra* as put in here, in the *Gurū Granth*, are not to be found anywhere, as such, and much less, in the same sequence and order. Thus, these doctrines, put in the same sequence and orders, have shaped the Sikh way of life, besides their philosophy, and consequently the historical evolution of Sikhism. As was the seed (*mūl*), so has grown the plant Sikhism.

3. The seven doctrines or principles of the *mūl mantra* are like this:

<i>Ek oamkār</i>	Unity, Unity in diversity, <i>advaita</i> .
<i>Sat(i) nām(u)</i>	Reality, Reality of the appearance, Truth manifest.
<i>Kartā purakh(u)</i>	Creativity, consciousness, conscious creativity,
<i>Nirbhau nirvair(u)</i>	Equality, Dignity, non-contradiction.
<i>Akāl mūrat(i)</i>	Beauty, Eternal Beauty, Personality.
<i>Ajūnī Saibham</i>	Non-dependence, Sovereign, Freedom.
<i>Gur prasād(i)</i>	Culture, cultivation of Personality, sweetness and light.

The Supreme Reality is one and indivisible, its manifestation and the form of creation is real, not illusory, the Supreme Reality is personified consciousness which is creative and is eternally progressing : the Supreme Reality admits of no contradiction or dichotomy but is the guarantee of equality and dignity, it is a personified existence full of beauty and is eternal; for its existence it is not dependent upon another source, rather, it is non-dependent, sovereign and free; the supreme personality is the essence of sweetness and light which is the essence of perfection. Each doctrine has two aspects, the transcendent and the immanent. Thus, for mankind the *mūl maṅtra* holds the ideal of unity, reality, creativity, equality, beauty, freedom and culture. These concepts can be allocated to metaphysics, *Ek oamkār*; philosophy, *sat(i) nām(u)*, religion *kartā purkh(u)*; sociology, *nirbhau nirvair(u)*; aesthetics, *akāl mūrat(i)*; political idealism, *ajūnī saibham*; and culture, *gur prasād(i)*. This is the representation of idealism of life. These concepts promote life and lead to perfection.

4. These seven postulates which are positive, imply the seven negatives, as a matter of course, which are plurality, illusoriness, nescience, dichotomy, transitoriness, bondage and darkness. Diversity, polytheism, plurality of gods and goddesses, *advaita* of *Jiva* and *Brahman* or of *jīva* and *jagat* (matter), etc. are the forms of plurality; that the world is a dreamy illusoriness, it is non-existent or it is only an appearance are the forms of illusion; that the creation is accidental or it is eternal or co-existent with the Supreme Reality are the forms of nescience; that

gradation or divisions of mankind are there and they are antagonistic to one another are the forms of dichotomy; that all existence is subject to change and decay is the form of transitoriness; that life is bondage or transmigration and there is no transcending it, are the forms of bondage, and that imperfection is the rule, is the form of darkness. These aspects or concepts are the very negation of life and destroy or retard it.

5. Each word of the *mūl maṇṭra* is a conceptual term and has been repeated hundreds and thousands of times in key-positions in the verses and hymns of the *Gurū Granth*. This situation commands that every verse of the scripture must be interpreted in terms of the *mūl maṇṭra*. Again, the profuse condemnation of the negative concepts such as *Maya*, *dubidhā*, *trikuṭī*, *haumai*, *hau*, *dūjā*, etc. suggests that the Supreme Reality is one and only one and duality or plurality is not to be entertained in any form. If the Oneness or Unity stands, the remaining concepts of the *mūl maṇṭra* evidently are upheld, for reality, being one, must be the Creator and the creation must emerge out of it alone or go back to it alone. If the Reality is one, it must be timeless it is all-pervading and perfect.

6. Leaving aside the major (longer) works, there are about five thousand hymns including *padās* (poems of 2 to 7) stanzas, *aṣṭapadīs* (8 stanza poems), *chhañts*, etc. In the *Gurū Granth*, the hymns or *padās* are mostly lyrical poems in which the soul is yearning to meet the one ultimate Absolute and is struggling to be rid of the duality or plurality that has come with ego, illusion, maya and ignorance. There is urge for Union with God in the *padās*. Thus they accept only the One as Reality and meeting the Absolute will be a union worth the name. The *aṣṭapadīs* are mostly didactic poems urging upon the mind to get rid of the duality, illusion and ignorance, and meditate on the Name which would lead to union with the Absolute. The *chhañts* generally sing of the spiritual bliss that is experienced when union with the Absolute Oneness is attained. Most of the *slokas* (verses, couplets) are critical of the life-pattern that is bound to come with the ignorance that leads to duality, plurality, immoral and unethical living; futile ritualism, improper worship of idols, superstitious practices, socio-political degradation, etc. and thus turn the mind to the One Absolute.

7. All the major compositions of the *Gurū Granth* are of philosophical nature and form. Each one of them invariably, gives the exposition of one or more concepts of the *mūl mantra*. This examination, as given below, will provide evidence for the proposition :

(i) The *Jap(u)* of Guru Nanak (*Gurū Granth*, pp. 1-8) conceives the ideally integrated and evolved man with such grace of virtues as chastity, *sat(i)*, patience, understandings, devotion contentment, humility, concentration, etc. which denote cultivation of man. Thus cultivation, points out the *Jap(u)*, requires the understanding of the Supreme Reality (*sodar*), Cosmic Order (*hukam*), or Will (*razā*) including the creation *pātālā pātāl* and the principles of creation and of the self (conscience) or psyche with all training of emotions, intellect and spirit through the Guru's *śavād* and the repetition of the Name. That is, the *Jap(u)* interprets the concepts of *Ek oamkār*, *sat(i) nām(u)*, *kartā purakh(u)*, *gur prasād(i)*, etc.

(ii) The '*Bārahmāhā* (*Rāga Mājh*, pages 133-136) of Guru Arjan holds that a person who is to be eternally attuned to the Supreme Reality, requires the understanding of the bondage of Karams, done in nescience or ignorance, for the lust of unreal maya or objects of transitory existence and has to overcome them. This he can do by understanding that the Supreme Reality is all-pervading and creative and by shunning all plurality, illusoriness, lethargy, etc.

(iii) The theme of '*Bāwan-Akharī*' (*Rāga Gaurī*, pages 250-62) by Guru Arjan is that only enlightenment by the Guru can liberate and emancipate man from the ignorance and the bondage of duality or plurality, as it is egoism. The Unity of the Supreme Reality is the theme of this long composition.

(iv) The '*Sukhmani*' (*Rāga Gaurī*' pages 265-96) of Guru Arjan preaches that perfection can be attained by meditating upon the Perfect which is the Supreme Reality, *Brahmagiyānī* or the knower of the Reality alone knows that form the One Transcendent the entire creation has emerged and the Transcendent is immanent in it, while it is sustained by

His Grace So, this composition is the study of the *ek oamkār*, *sat(i) nām(u)*, *kartā purakh(u)* and *gur prasād(i)* aspect of the *mūl maṇṭra*.

(v) The '*Thitī*' (*Rāga Gaurī*, pages 296-300) of Guru Arjan rejects the *dvait* (duality), the three *guṇas*, etc. and upholds the *Ek Oamkār*, i.e. Oneness of Reality. The composition further holds that the Vedas and the six shastras uphold the Oneness and not plurality.

(vi) The '*Anarid*' (*Rāga Rāmkalī*, pages 917-22) has as its theme the spiritual bliss of man which comes to him as the Guru enlightens him about the Oneness of God, rejecting and eliminating ego, sensuousness, illusory maya, carnal pleasures, etc. for him.

(vii) The '*Oamkār*' (*Rāga Rāmkalī*, pages 929-38) of Guru Nanak tells that *Oamkār* or the One Reality is the source of the *triune* of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva of all time and space, of the Vedas and the scriptures. The Oneness of God is indivisible and hence all divisions of caste, creed, *varṇa* or *āshrama*, created by man, are false and misconceived in illusion, maya.

(viii) The '*Sidh-Gosṭ(i)*' (*Rāga Rāmkalī*, pages 938-46) of Guru Nanak maintains that all creation is real because it has its ground in the One Real and that man should like the worldly life by transcending illusion, ego, duality and carnal pleasures and meditation on the Name.

(ix) The '*Bārah Māhā*' (*Rāga Tukhārī*, pages 1107-10) of Guru Nanak maintains that for remaining eternally attuned to the Reality, one must transcend the duality and illusion and by repetition of the Name get the true enlightenment.

(x) All the twenty-two *Vārs* of the *Gurū Granth* which are major compositions, each covering 10-15 pages, have the same theme. The pattern of the *Vār*-theme is that the Reality is one and the creation emerges out of that Reality under the will and law of the Supreme Reality. However, man strays away from the Reality on account of his ignorance and the impact of maya or ego : the Guru reclaims him to God, he attains bliss by realizing the Reality.

8. More detailed examination of the hymns or the longer works of

the *Gurū Granth* is not possible in the short span of such a paper. That the *mūl mantra* should influence the entire course of thinking of the contributions of the *Gurū Granth*, is natural, if we know that it is not taken to be a human composition but a direct revelation to Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. God uttered this mantra when He commissioned Guru Nanak to preach the 'Name to the ailing humanity'. The founder Guru and his successors interpreted and re-interpreted only the *mūl mantra* in their compositions and utterances. It was their mission.

9. Needless to say that in the course of history, the entire approach of the Sikhs towards life, patterned on the doctrines or the concept of Unity, has led to castelessness, unorthodoxy, simplicity, frankness, straight living, freedom from ambiguity, superstition and perplexity. The belief in the reality of the worldly existence has given them their zest of life, struggle and perseverance. The doctrine of creative consciousness has inspired them with creative activity, planning and work. Their political, moral and social concepts include justice, equality, fearlessness, freedom, self-determination and sovereignty, basis for which are provided by *nirbhau*, *nirvair(u)*, *ajūni* and *saibham*.

The tenets of the *mūl mantra* have great impact on the Sikh way of life. They are the sources of their inspiration.

***MŪL MAÑTRA* : SOME PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS**

Sohan Singh

The Indian tradition has always taken pleasure in preserving cherished truths in the form of sutras—strings of noetic word—globules. Each word-globule is a meaning-concentrate. The string of word-globules comes out of the intensive thought of a seer, and every generation, every individual, under the guidance of a guru, a teacher, undertakes the task of opening up each globule to extract as much meaning from it as his imbibing capacity permits him to extract. The *sutra* was not only a monemonic device in a culture, where writing, though known, was not much used, it was also a device to bring as much view of a subject as possible, into one comprehension-span, into one conceptual grasp. Viewed as such, Guru Nanak's *mūl mantra* given below, is a *sutra*. Indeed, since it gives a view of Reality itself, it may be called a *mahā sūtra*. The *mūl mantra* is a composition of 14 units, of which one is a numeral and the other 13 are words. Tradition takes the words, in the first case the numeral and the word, in pairs. We will try to follow the tradition, though not strictly.

The symbol ॐ is pronounced *Oamkār* and sometimes also written as such. The word *oam*, constituted of *o* (*ūrdhvam*=above, in Sanskrit *u* is often changed to *o*), *a* (*adhar*=below) and *m* (*madhyam*=in) between denotes all that is. In modern usage all that is, is called nature. The starting point for any search for the Real must be nature, for, as Guru Nanak said, the Creator can only be seen in His Creation : Nanak, the Beneficent Lord alone is True: and He is Revealed through His Nature.¹

The numeral 1 (pronounced in Punjabi as *ek*) denotes the unity of nature. The unity of nature can be understood in two ways. First, though, nature is composed of pieces of being or as we may call them, finite

beings, as against non-being, yet all the pieces of being that is, nature, compose one separate group—the group of beings. As such, it has a separate identity. Secondly, as far as we know, the whole of nature is governed by common laws. These laws operate on earth and in the remotest galaxies observed, and there is no place known to man with all his new reach where these laws are known to be imperative. The following noetic word-globules elucidate further the concept of One Nature.

Sat(i) Nām(u) : The word *sat(i)* comes from the Sanskrit word *satya*, meaning ‘truth’ or ‘reality’. But coming after *ākār* as one pole in the bipolar globule *sat(i) nām(u)* it means reality as existence, in contrast to reality as something non-existing, yet real. Nature is a conglomerate of two realities—existence and idealities—*sat(i)* and *nām(u)*. And existence is so informed with idealities that we cannot conceive of existence apart from ideality, *sat(i)* apart from *nām(u)*. Nor for that matter, can we conceive of *nām(u)* apart from *sat(i)*, because, according to Guru Nanak, *nām(u)* throughout the eons wears the same apparel, the apparel of existence :

*Ād(i) anīl(u) anād(i) anāhat(i) jug(u) jug(u) eko ves(u).*²

The Punjabi word *sat(i)* means truth, it also means power (*śakti*). And existence is both. Existence is truth, though not the whole of truth and it is the test of truth. There is no other approach to truth other than the empirical approach. But existence is truth, because it is power, energy. An energy-less existence, would not be existence at all—dead matter is dead once for all, and no philosophy with any credibility can ever resurrect the concept of a dead matter.

The power of existence manifests itself as change in finite existence. A changed existent thing nevertheless remains an existent thing, and hence, existence manifests diversity. Existence, because it is *sat(i)* or power³, is essentially pluralistic. And yet as the ‘one’, the very first word of the *mūl mantra* tells us, it is a diversity informed with unity. We have briefly (and provisionally) indicated the unity aspect of experience in para 2 above, but will explain it in more detail in our elucidation of the concept of *nām(u)*.

Take a finite existence—say, an atom of carbon. The nature of a carbon-atom is exhausted by its behaviour in various ways, in various combinations with other entities. There is no carbonness in any atom apart from these ways of behaviour, some of which as for example, the formation of stable double bonds, can only be grasped in mathematical formulations. These laws of behaviour, these ‘laws of nature’, as we call them, are not qualified by existence, but they are not unreal. They are real as idealities. Now, the basis of epistemology, the very possibility of knowledge, rests on this that all idealities cohere in a system, they cohere one with the other. This coherent system of idealities is *nām(u)*. The world as understood is, therefore, a conglomerate of *sat(i)* and *nām(u)*, existence and logos, in which it is difficult to take apart the one from the other.

The idealities, governing the behaviours of the carbon atom, not only determine the ways in which the carbon atom does behave in known circumstances, they also determine the possible ways it might behave in circumstances not yet known to us. The idealities thus include possibilities. We know our world as it is. But we cannot exclude the possibility of different worlds, all of them, of course, consistent with the system of idealities that operate in our world. Conceptually, therefore, *nām(u)* overflows existence and is greater than existence. That indicates the primacy of *nām(u)* in the ying-yang pair of *sat(i)* *nām(u)*, the primacy which Guru Nanak always gives to *nām(u)*, for example, when he mentions this in the first *paurī* of *Āsa dī Vār*.⁴

It is clear that *kudarat* (Arabic *quadrat*) or nature takes a second place for him.

Before passing on to other noetic globules in the *mūl maṇṭra* I would like to dwell a little on the *sat(i)*, the existence aspect of Reality. Guru Nanak was always antipathetic to any view of the world which denigrated its reality or made the world illusory. To make the world illusory is to inject non-being into the very texture of the world. This would tantamount to vitiaing man’s dharma in the world, He was, therefore firm on the principle that the creation is as real as the Creator. And his idea of creation

which is real, is astonishingly catholic—it includes, besides, material existence, the culture of man, including his thoughts and his values.⁵ Any understanding of the world must start from the reality of physical nature as well as nature manifested in the culture of man.

Karatā Purakh(u) : We have said that change belongs to the essence of Being. But all change in beings is in accordance with the ideality of man. And as in the *sat(i) nām(u)* pair, the primacy belongs to *nām(u)*, we may call it the *kartā*, the Creator. But since *nām(u)*, gives a form, or even gives existence to a particular form, it is also a giver of life to that form. The Creator is also, therefore, a Giver.⁶

The Sanskrit root for compassion (*dayā*) is *dā* which is also the root for the Giver (*dātā*). This helps us to understand the verse in the *Jap(u)* which says that the universal order (*dharma*), which supports everything in the universe in contentment, in its own nature, *sañtokh(u)* is born out of this compassion (*dayā*).⁷

We in the far depths of the 20th century have a far greater fund of knowledge that had Guru Nanak in the beginning of the 16th century, to enable us to understand the nature of change in the cosmic sense, and hence, we are in a position to appreciate his (and the Indian) insight into Reality which ascribes the term *purakh(u)* (Sanskrit. *puruṣa*), that is, personality, to it. We now know that there is a movement in existence from the finite to the infinite, from elementary particles to man, and beyond, which is also, as we can see, a movement from the unconscious to the conscious and the more conscious. This movement can be traced, without being too meticulous, from simple elementary particles, through atoms, simple molecules, complex molecules and cells to organisms, and within organisms from *vox* to man. In this ascending series each step has more of being, or a higher reality, than the previous step. Thus, man has more being and a higher reality than a simple molecule. This *more* is not mere aggregation, but a new quality of being a greater being. In the cosmological sense the only valid meaning we can give to this *more* or *greater* is *fulfilment*. A cell, for example, has more fulfilment of being than a hydroxyl group. To distinguish itself from mere aggregation or accretion, fulfilment implies an attestation of fulfilment, that is to say, a

feeling of fulfilment. And, since the ascending steps commence from depths even lower than the elementary particles, we infer that feeling, rudimentary at lower levels, but yet a feeling must be a pervasive and an integral aspect of Being. Every fulfilment-step in the ascending series must have its own type of attestation, its own type of feeling. There must, therefore, be a hierarchy of attestations, a hierarchy of feelings. In our own lives we know two types of attestations—a lower type, we call pleasure, and a higher type, such as for example, the delight we experience in constructing or comprehending a scientific theory. The point is that feeling belongs to a *puruṣa* and, hence, the cosmic movement generates a series of ascending *puruṣas*. A higher *puruṣa* may be chemico-physical fusion of many *puruṣas*. For example, man is a chemi-physical fusion of innumerable cell/*puruṣas*.⁸

To understand the full significance of *karatā purakh(u)*, we will have to take one step further. We said in para 5 above that *nām(u)* has, within it, possibilities not actualized in the world, that is to say, possibilities of new types of finite beings coming into existence. As we shall see, there is no way out of the belief that being is infinite, and infinity transforms the meaning of many of our everyday concepts, such as time and space. Let us take this idea of 'possibility'. When we say that a new-born baby has the potentiality (i.e. possibility) in him to become a great scientist, we mean to say that the interaction between his body-with-a-brain and his varying environment in the years to come may eventually result in his turning out a great scientist. Thus actualization of possibility in finite being involves interaction with the other. But with Being, there, is no other and hence, possibility in Being can only mean some kind of actuality. The trend in human evolution indicates the achievement of much higher levels of consciousness in the future than has been achieved so far levels of consciousness where the universe will be conceptually crystal clear to man. Of Reality in this totality, that is of *karatā purakh(u)* we can, therefore, say that such consciousness already exists in Him, even though it may exist in the manner in which the consciousness of a great scientist exists in his sleep.

Nirbhau : To be finite is to be in *bhai*. *Bhai* literally means fear but Guru Nanak uses the term to mean constraint, may be the constraint of law. (Guru Nanak frequently turns old words to express new concepts). Thus the sun and the moon in their regular orbits are said to be in *bhai*. Action under *bhai* can only produce uniform results. Novelty can only come out of one who is *nirbhai*, free and spontaneous. The cosmic process is full of amazing novelties-new structures, new beings. Spontaneity, the quality of *nirbhai*, is therefore, the characteristic of *karatā purakh(u)*. A finite being becomes capable of creativity, in the sense of creation of a novelty, when he enjoys a sense of freedom or spontaneity, when he approaches the state of *nirbhai*. But supreme creativity belongs to the *purakh(u)*, who is *nirbhai*, par excellence, who is pure spontaneity.

Nirvair(u) denotes absence of conflict, that is to say, harmony. We said earlier that *nām(u)* denotes coherence of idealities in a system. This coherence of idealities in a system reflects itself in a harmony, even pre-established harmony, in creation. The concept of pre-established harmony, which is the basis of the cosmological argument for the existence of God, has often been poooh-pooohed in the history of western philosophy as smelling of anthropomorphism. In the first place, what is wrong about anthropomorphism ? Human consciousness is the result of a cosmic evolutionary process, and if we project this process to a future we are only projecting cosmic tendencies of which man has been one materialization, and that we believe, not the final one. Secondly, let us take two substances which have played a crucial role in the evolution of life, the carbon atom and water. These two substances pre-date what we call life by eons. The constitution and properties of carbon and water are so extraordinary, so bafflingly unlike the properties of their nearest analogues, such as the silicon atom and H₂O. that one wonders whether nature had not the foresight to see that eons later, it would need carbon atom and water to produce life and man. This is to say that the burden of proofs lies on those who oppose the cosmological argument.

The existence of evil is the greatest hurdle in the way of accepting Reality as *nirvair(u)*. There is no doubt that on the level of finite entities, evil is real and it cannot be explained away. Evil is a necessary

concomitant of finitude. But the theme of the cosmic movement is the transcending of finitude, and we have to view the existence of evil against the background of this movement. Let us consider the three main evils—death, pain and frustration. The signification of death is dramatically made clear in lower forms of life, where the mother dies in the act of reproduction, death is the door to more life. The same is true of higher forms of life. If death were not, and all who are born clutter up on earth, evolution would stop. By itself death is but an incidence, it is made into an evil in human society, where, it is a source of pain and frustration to those who survive the dead. A different economic system and a proper education would reduce death to an eternal sleep without any emotional trauma for the survivors. Physical pain is a biological signal, meaning this way lies disintegration of life, avoid it. Antipodal to the feeling of fulfilment, it is a feeling in the service of life. Frustration in modern life comes mostly out of economic maladjustment and snobbish social norms. This kind of frustration is not enough to taint reality. Fundamentally, however, finitude is frustration to a self-conscious being. This is the mainspring of all religions, it is the first *ārya satya*. But it will be seen it does not conflict with the *nirvair(u)*-ness of Reality, taken in its non-finitude.

Ākāl combines the meanings of timelessness and eternity. *Nām(u)* is timeless, *sat(i)* is eternal. For example, the laws governing the emergence of life are timeless. Wherever and whenever the conditions for the emergence of life ripen, life will ensue. Time does not enter as a factor in the formulation of these conditions. But this timelessness of *nām(u)* must combine with eternity, because Reality is *sat(i) nām(u)*, existence—logos. As we will see, Guru Nanak says that the Real Being is self-existent. The concept of self-existence implies eternity. Apart from that, modern theories of cosmology give us a idea of what it means to say that Reality is eternal. We know five kinds of time-psychological time, life time, historical time, geological time and cosmological time. Taking our view from the psychological, or even life-time, each successive member of the series, following one upon the other, imprints on our minds a meaning, the cumulative effect of which we can only call eternity. At

present the 'big bang theory' of creation is most popular among cosmological theorists. It dates creation to 12 or 15 billion years ago. But can we say that before the big bang there was the abysmal darkness of non-being ? We have the theory of Lematre posits a series of expansions and contractions of the universe. The point of such theories is that the human mind, itself having its roots deep in cosmological tendencies, cannot imagine Being otherwise than as eternal.

Mūrat(i), Ajūni : The tension within Being, which springs from the ying-yang pairing of *sat(i)* and *nām(u)* works itself out in the dialectical movement within existence, we call evolution of beings. It results in the materialization of finite beings, *mūrats*, and their unending parade of fleeting individuals, species, genera and families, to show that Being is not exhausted by the finite forms or *mūrats*, that it is essentially beyond them, that it is *ajūni*, beyond any final materialization. As Guru Nanak himself has sung :

Thou hast a thousand eyes and yet not a single eye, a thousand forms, yet not a single form...⁹

I have now in my mind the image of a trilobite, crawling after its prey laboriously on the sea-bed 50 crore years ago. When that trilobite existed, was it unreal ? No. My mind now replaces the image of the lowly trilobite by that of a scientist, working out the life-sequence of a star like our sun. Is the life-sequence of a star, comprising billions of years unreal ? Again, No. Being is, therefore, a tapestry of eternity woven out of the threads of momentary concerns of countless evanescent beings. The single threads are real and so is the tapestry. *Mūrat(i)* and *ajūni* are different facets of the same Reality.

Saibham comes from Sanskrit *swayambhū*, meaning self-existent. Some years ago, Hoyle propounded a theory of protons being created constantly out of nothing in the depths of empty space, ultimately to form galaxies, to replace galaxies that vanish into non-existence at the outer edge of the universe. This cosmological theory has now been demolished. The fact is that human imagination, with its roots in the cosmic movement, knows of no other formula of change except : *this*

from *that* and both the *this* and the *that* remain within the bounds of existence. Existence cannot come out of non-existence. We are like a fish in the depths of an ocean which is totally circumscribed by water and cannot imagine any environment other than water.

It remains for us to trace out the implications of Being as self-existent. In the first place, if Beings is self-existent, nothing else is self-existent. For, if any other thing were self-existent it would be being, because it would be self-existent. Thus space and time cannot be self-existent or independent beings. Time is an abstraction from change, which is inherent in Being. Space is, again, a way of speaking of simultaneity within Being. This point that space and time are aspects of Being and not independent Newtonian entities, need not now be laboured, as the theory of relativity has shown the mutual relationship between time, space, energy and mass. Together with feeling (the psychic quality), they are all facts of Beings.

Secondly, if Being is self-existent, it is infinite. There are three types of limitations to Being, we can imagine the limitations of space, time and creation. If Being was limited in space, it should mean space beyond Being. But space, we have seen, has no existence apart from Being, and hence, it cannot limit Being. Similarly, since time has no existence apart from Being, it too cannot limit Being. If Being were sans creativity, it would reduce change in Being, change which is integral to the concept of Being, to mechanical motion, which means Being in *bhai*. But Being is *nirbhai*. Thus we see that we can not logically posit a self-existent Being which is a finite being.

I, a finite being, cannot imagine what it is to be infinite. The only meaning I can give to infinity is 'beyond and beyond'. And the 'beyond and beyond' transforms things with which we are familiar. We know that infinite numbers have properties quite different from finite numbers. Thus $00+00=00$; $00-00=00$; $00 \times 00=00$; etc. Such properties do not belong to finite numbers. Thus in a self-existent, infinite Being time would have the property of timelessness, space would have the property of a boundless closedness and creativity would be a play of Being. These words are

mere shadows of shadows. We really have no concepts to express the properties of our familiar ideas under the transforming magic of infinity.

Gur prasād(i) : Many a time, in the above, we have referred to the cosmic movement. This movement consisting of a succession of finite entities, say, from elementary particles to man, has a theme the theme of the erosion of finitude or the achievement of the infinite. From the utterly finite and uncounscious elementary particles to man, conscious of cosmos, is an eye-opener run of the film, which is not yet stopped. At one point in the run of this film we find the finite being, man, confronting the Infinite. This is the religious moment of man, of the stage of cosmic evolution, we call man. Henceforth, through knowledge and widening symbiosis, man attempts to crack one shell of finitude after another . In this process a man, himself filled with the vision of the infinite. acts as a lure, a magnet, to other men to follow his path leading from the finite to the infinite. We call such a God-filled man, *Guru*. And the lure he exercises on others is seen by other men as his impelling Grace, *prasād(i)*. For the religious and post-religious humanity, the Grace of the Guru is the device for the continuation of the cosmic movement from the finite to the infinite.

The *mūl mantra* is not meant to present the picture of a God, high and beyond, and unrelated to man with his trials and tribulations. It is the light which man must see and guide himself thereby, despite his predicaments, and even though he see it dimly. It is the lure which the Guru presents to each man, it is the dim destiny which call to man through the living Grace of the Guru, *gur prasād(i)*. The fulfillment of the destiny may by eons upon eons in the distant future. But man, once confronted with the vision, cannot turn his face away. For the Guru in humanity is always there to remind him of it and to lure him to it whenever the common run of humanity tends to relax. Further, in every age the drive of humanity towards the Infinite takes on its new complexion. In our age, for example, science, technology freedom, threat of alienation and the fear of death is the concern of man. In our age we have to widen the vision of one Nature. *Ek Oamkār*, we have to forge human institutions and man's relation to the non-human world which is free from *vair*, which reflect the quality of *nirvair(u)* in its totality and in every cell of it. In

this way of *nirvair(u)* too, we have to overcome the circumstances which engender alienation in individuals. And this we can do if we are spontaneously creating, *nirbhau*, and do not rely on old mechanisms. Again, through exercising our spontaneity and creativity, we have to devise institutions and education, so that, taking the evanescence of forms, *mūrats*, as a way of Reality, which is *ajūni*, we free ourselves from our obsession with death and death-dealers, like cancer and heart-diseases, which a mortal man, a *mūrat(i)*, is heir to, and devote our quest, not to the conquest of these ailments, but to probe the mysteries of life and universe which continue to defy us. Thus the final pair of noetic word-globules of the *mūl mantra*, *gur prasād(i)* presents it as the perennial quest of man. The essential qualities of Reality are the qualities which are posited as the ultimate heritage of man. And it bespeaks of the greatness of the author of the *mūl mantra* that in a sutra of a few words, and despite the age in which the sutra was composed, he has done full justice to the plenitude of man's heritage-in-waiting.

NOTES

- 1 ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚ ਦਾਤਾਰੁ ਸਿਨਾਖਤੁ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 141
- 2 ਆਦਿ ਅਨੀਲੁ ਅਨਾਦਿ ਅਨਾਹਤਿ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗ ਏਕੋ ਵੇਸੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 6
- 3 Existence is sheer vitality, forever passing from one position or guise into another. Quoted in Andrew J. Beck, *The New American Philosophers; An Explanation of Thought Since World War II*, p. 329.
- 4 ਆਪੀਨੇ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ॥
ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 463
- 5 ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥
ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪੈਨਣੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਪਿਆਰੁ॥
ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਜਾਤੀ ਜਿਨਸੀ ਰੰਗੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਜੀਅ ਜਹਾਨ॥
ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਨੇਕੀਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਬਦੀਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਮਾਨੁ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 464.
- 6 ਦਾਤਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਤੂੰ ...॥ *Ibid.*, p. 463.
- 7 ਧੋਲੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦਇਆ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੁ॥
ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਸੁਤਿ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 8 This line of reasoning is similar to that of the American Philosopher Charles Hartshorne, A.J. Beck, *op. cit.*, p. 29 ff.
- 9 ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਨੈਨ ਨ ਨ ਨੈਨ ਹੋਹਿ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਉ ਸਹਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਨਾ ਏਕ ਤ੍ਰੋਹੀ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 13.

PHILOSOPHY OF *MŪL MAṆṬRA*

Wazir Singh

The *mūl maṇṭra* is a philosophic testimony of Guru Nanak's poetic vision of the supreme reality. The *maṇṭra* consists of fourteen symbols through which the Guru projects the nature, potentialities and values of the Being of his vision. The equivalent symbols that may be used in the interpretation of his terms are indicated below :

<i>Ek</i>	The One Positive Essence (Absolute spirit)
<i>Oaṁkāṛ</i>	The Protector of all Existence (<i>Aum</i>)
<i>Sat(i)</i>	The Reality Supreme
<i>Nām(u)</i>	Manifest in Truth
<i>Karatā</i>	The Principle of Creation
<i>Purakh(u)</i>	The Conscious Being (Person)
<i>Nirbhau</i>	Controlled by none
<i>Nirvair(u)</i>	Contradicted by none
<i>Akāl</i>	Reality Transcending Time
<i>Mūrat(i)</i>	Immanent in Cosmic Form
<i>Ajūnī</i>	Not cast in the womb
<i>Saibham</i>	Installed by none
<i>Gur</i>	Enlightener of All
<i>Prasād(i)</i>	Grace of All.

I have called the symbols of the *mūl maṇṭra* a 'philosophic testimony'. The reason is two fold. Guru Nanak has symbolized through them, his philosophic quest for the articulation of spiritual experience. It is not in the fashion of a scientist's quest for truth; he is not aiming at the acquisition of knowledge that may be logically formulated, or from which demonstrable conclusions are to be drawn. Whatever he has expressed cannot be judged as 'true' or 'false' in the narrow technical sense of the propositions of science. Yet, all what he has said, through the 14 constituents of his *mūl maṇṭra* is knowledge in philosophic sense. It is a

concise statement of the conceptual framework of a new religious faith. The second part of the reason is that the symbols employed by Guru Nanak, readily lend themselves to metaphysical interpretation. Nearly all of them have a tradition of philosophic, theistic beliefs held in India and, in the form of their counterparts, in the West as well.

Why I characterized the vision of Guru Nanak as 'poetic'? Because it is an insight into the nature of Being, that has revealed to us a number of its attributes, but which is not an intellectual inquiry making use of scientific methods and directed towards a balanced, reasoned out, logical structure. Ostensibly, the *mūl maṇṭra* seems to have attempted a description of the objectively real, in a detached manner, without any subjective commitment. But if such were the case, some evidence of empirical observation might have been adduced, some argumentation should have been employed and a rational construction placed on the object of examination. Its further implication would be that Guru Nanak proceeded without an inner, personal experience. But the quality of his poetry leaves little doubt as to the depth of his vision and intimate grasp of the reality depicted in his verse. The symbolism employed to express the features of this reality is indicative of the existential experience gone through, and not merely an abstract, impersonal portrayal of the object of rational choice. His was essentially a religious experience, and hence experience of an existential situation.

The first of the *mūl maṇṭra*, comprising the group of four elements of *ek*, *oam̐kār*, *sat(i)* and *nām(u)* presents an integrated view of the ultimate reality, that is subject to metaphysical and religious interpretations simultaneously. In fact, the symbols *Ek* (the One) and *Sat(i)* (the Real) refer to the Absolute of Philosophy, and the symbols *Oam̐kār* (the Providence) and *Nām(u)* (the True) refer to the Absolute of religion. All the four are indicative of the ontological status that Guru Nanak chose to give to the Supreme Being. The numeral '1' (ੴ) represents the Single Undifferentiated Essence which is the unmanifest, formless Absolute. The symbol *oam̐kār*, on the other hand, represents the expressed power of Being, in its differentiated, manifest forms. The combination of *ek-oam̐kār*, on the whole, is therefore indicative of the one-many, unmanifest-manifest, Absolute-cum-God. This may remind one of the *Advaitic Brahman-Īśvara*

pair, but in Shankara the personified *Īsvara* is ultimately assimilated into the impersonal 'Absolute or Brahman. Not so in Guru Nanak. He makes no attempt to reduce one into the other. Both retain their position and importance as aspects of the same single system.

Oamkār is intrinsically related to the concept of existence in all its dimensions. The universe is sustained and supported by a conscious Being who is the Providence. He is one with existence; the world is but a personification of Him; or to put it differently He is immanent in the universe of infinite forms. This universe cannot be chaotic; being the expression of one single power or essence, it must be capable of unification in a single system. It is, therefore, an ordered universe or cosmos. Its contents are arranged in a polyphasic unity, from lower to higher and still higher orders, ultimately reaching the oneness of the Absolute. That explains the comprehensibility of the world-order, its rational character, its intelligibility to the human mind, which itself is a product and part of the nature's system. It is the manifest aspect or Truth that is revealed to the human agency of science, in the form of processes of nature. In discovering the universe and its laws, science is becoming aware of the Providence; in realizing the truth of existence, man is reaching out to his ultimate concern and support.

The fact that *Oamkār* in the *mūl mantra* is preceded by 'ੴ' shows that in spite of the manyness of the revealed world, its oneness is not to be lost sight of. It is monistic in character, though pluralistic in content. It is many, yet one. But it is one, and not zero. Guru Nanak's choice of the numeral '1' is unmistakable indication of his characterization of the highest reality as positive essence, in contrast with the negativism of *śūnyavād* or nihilism. It is presence and affirmation, not negation. The world emanates from the positive essence; as such it is a real world, and not merely an illusion. A world in which the Providence is immanent, cannot be pure falsehood. Thus, the living, all-extensive, all-comprehensive reality which is unitary, yet multifaced, is the object of estimation in the *mūl mantra*. In the very next symbol of *sat(i)*, Guru Nanak has actually described it as the Real. In philosophical terms, it is the basic substance of all the modes of existence; it is the reality of the things and forms of the world, or the spiritual essence underlying all

existence. Here Guru Nanak seems to be emerging from the plane of intuitive faith to that of philosophic belief. He had the vision of a power expressing itself as the Being, immanent in the world-order. Now, he is considering this power as the really real, the focus of all, that is, the ultimate object of all pursuit of knowledge.

Guru Nanak has combined the symbol *sat(i)* with the symbol *nām(u)* which literally means 'name'. Here again, the implication of the existent world-order is clear. When we refer to the world of names and forms, we refer to the concrete, empirical universe which we know in our ordinary experience and discover through the agency of science. In short, *nām(u)* is Truth, or the knowable aspect of Reality. It represents the natural order, corresponding to the symbol *oamkār*. *Nām(u)* accordingly, is of the nature of *Īśvara* or God, immanent in the universe. Whatever is, is *nām(u)*. But the world as a totality may be conceived in terms of a process, a moving and developing universe which is not a finally perfect order of things. What then, is the status of God conceived as Truth? The universe is neither complete nor perfect. Can we say that God's nature also lacks completeness and perfection, since God is identical with the universe? If the universe is developing, the nature of God must also be developing; if the world is finite so must be the Divine.

Most of us, I imagine, who are accustomed to thinking of God in absolute terms, as the perfect, unsurpassable Being, might experience a sense of shock at the description of God in terms of relatively perfect, or a finite being. Recent philosophy, however, has experimented with the concept of a finite God, or God in the making. If the universe is not a closed or finished being, then the universe of tomorrow would not be the same as of today. God who is identical with the universe of today, will not, therefore, be identical with the universe of tomorrow, unless. He also develops and identifies Himself with the changed universe. Hence, the concept of the developing nature of God, that is, an unfinished Being in process, or God that is becoming unfolding, actualizing His potentialities. We may assert, for the sake of argument, that a good person is one who suffers at the spectacle of evil or suffering of others. If God is good then He must suffer with the suffering of worldly beings. But in that event, He will not be absolute bliss, since His bliss would be tempered

by suffering, which is negation of bliss. In case He remains in bliss, in spite of the suffering of mankind, what kind of a good God is He.

Those of the idealist philosophers who conceive the Absolute as the necessary, supreme and infinite Being, regard the universe as phenomenal, conditioned and finite. The world is contingent as against reality that is necessary, but the world is ultimately absorbed into the Absolute, since the two cannot be divorced from each other. Evidently, then, the necessary and infinite Being contains the contingent and finite within itself. The aspect that is supremely real or *sat(i)* is indissolubly associated with the aspect that is phenomenal or *nām(u)*. Thus the *sat(i) nām(u)* of the *mūl mantra* may be interpreted as the Real-cum-Apparent, Infinite-Finite, Being-Becoming. It does not mean that the Divine Being lacks perfection; it only implies that in His phenomenal aspect He is finite, whereas in His transcendent aspect, He is infinite and perfect. When Whitehead presents the bipolar nature of God, he is combining the flux and process of the world with the permanence and reality of the Divine. To him, God is the selective principle, according to which eternal objects are picked out from the realm of possibility and placed in the realm of actuality. The primordial nature of God is the conceptual pole. He is the Ground of all rationality, and is the eternal, transcendental Absolute. The consequent nature of God is the physical pole; He is the immanent God, the source and creator of the actual physical world, a factor within reality.

In the second part of the *mūl mantra*, Guru Nanak counted eight attributes of Divine Being. He starts with the creative principle (*karatā*) which to Indian tradition is known as Brahma. This attribute of God, supported by a majority of theologians in the East and the West, is nonetheless attacked by the contemporary movement of 'process theology' and metaphysics of critical naturalism. God does not stand outside the flow of time; nor is He the creator of the universe ex nihilo. Naturalism is prepared to admit God as co-existent with the totality of nature of universe, but a perfect, eternal and transcendent God, it asserts, is an unwarranted interpretation of the religious experience of certain individuals. Guru Nanak, however, attributes positive creativity to his God.

Another feature of the highest reality, according to Guru Nanak, is consciousness, which is clear from its characterization as Person, *purakh(u)*. It may be asked, to which aspect of reality, personality is attributed to the Absolute of philosophy, or to the God of religion? The Indian tradition favours the concept of *sat-chit-ānand*, that is, it treats the Absolute as reality, consciousness and bliss. The implication is that Supreme Being does not *possess* consciousness, but rather it is consciousness. It is not merely 'It' but 'He', which means a person. As consciousness, He may be the Ground of rationality and order in the universe. He is the cosmic consciousness, in the sense of personification of the cosmos that is self-aware. But is it not just a projection of the human mind that is termed 'cosmic awareness'? Is it not, as Feuerbach believed, that man has created God in his own image, as a person endowed with consciousness. Thought, according to Spinoza, is one of the infinite number of attributes of the divine substance, which is nothing but nature. Is it nature that is depicted as *purakh(u)* in the *mūl maṇṭra*? We cannot, here, fail to remember that Guru Nanak's Supreme Being is Creator or *karatā* as well. He, as the Creator of the natural order, also identifies Himself with His creation. He is *karatā-cum-purakh(u)*, that is, He is the conscious creative force; not merely an abstract principle, but a living and thinking Being possessed of personal qualities.

The next pair of attributes *nirbhau* and *nirvair(u)* are ordinarily interpreted in a way that brings the Divine Person down to exclusively human level. To say that God is not afraid of anyone, and bears no enmity to anyone, does not do justice to the concept of realmost entity. *Bhau* is not merely 'fear', it is control and discipline as well. Similarly *vair(u)* is not simply enmity; it also means opposition and contradiction. Guru Nanak seems to imply that the Absolute is unsurpassable and hence under the discipline of none. A higher and more authoritative being is unthinkable. As God, He is not in subordination to anyone; as such He is absolutely free. In *sat-chit-ānand*, the highest reality is characterized as 'bliss', which is also rendered as 'freedom'. God does as He pleases; He is not bound by any limitations; all rules and principles emanate from Him, since He is the Ground of all thought and reason. This uncontrolled, un-disciplined Being is also the un-contradicted Being. No logical contradictory of Him

is possible; it makes no sense to say that there is a non-Being as opposed to Being. Guru Nanak is conceiving the Absolute as unique and affirmative. There is no match for Him; there is no negation of Him.

The symbols of *akāl* and *mūrat(i)* seek to convey the featureless reality that has features as well. Literally, *akāl* is non-temporal, that is, not governed by time, above and beyond the process of time and history, or simply eternal. The empirical world of names and forms is temporal; all modes of existence are events occurring along the long vista of universal history. To put it differently, time is the creative force; all this wondrous show of the world is a product of time. In the polarity between time and eternity, time is conceived as motion, as process, whereas eternity is motionless, ever the same. Laws of motion bring into being the forms and modes of physical existence. But no such laws apply to the ultimate reality, which therefore remains formless and featureless. Then, what is it? Simply void? Simply negation or zero? Guru Nanak at once adds that the featureless, non-temporal reality appears in form also; it acquires all the features of image or *mūrat(i)*. It is eternal, yet in form. It is both time and eternity, developing and beyond development; or in Whitehead's terminology, Process and Reality.

Then follow the attributes of *ajūnī* and *saibhamī*, i.e. non-born and self-installed. The Divine Person is not subject to biological norms; He need not develop the features of higher organisms in the manner of animal species. If He is above the temporal process that governs the physical universe, He also transcends the process that gives birth to animate beings. Then, how does He appear in tangible form; if He has no designer, no maker, no parent, who brings Him into existence, who installs and establishes Him? The answer is-Himself. The unmanifest has the capacity for manifestation, for self-expression, and self-installation. This automatic establishment in the concrete form is the unique feature of the otherwise subtle and featureless reality. No other entity, creature or being, shares this potentiality of Guru Nanak's Absolute.

After presenting the nature and attributes of the Divine spirit of his poetic vision, Guru Nanak enters the realm of values. If the Absolute is possessed of unique, unshared powers, what does it matter to us? If He

has nothing to do with mankind, how is He relevant to human life? But Guru Nanak brings man into relationship with his benevolent Providence or the Lord supreme. As the ultimate source of system and order in the universe, God enlightens the human mind and equips it for the discovering of cosmic order. In this respect, He is the divine Teacher (Guru), who guides the destiny of man, shows him the path of life, and gives him freedom of choice and action in the framework of temporal existence. Not only that He is the 'enlightener', the Divine Person of Guru Nanak's vision is gracious also. He is embodiment of Grace itself. It is His grace, *prasād(i)* that the order of nature is unfolding itself, that evolution has led to the emergence of mankind with powers of intelligent activity and self-consciousness. It is through divine grace that man is in a position to seek and promote values, that he is enabled to experience the Divine in nature as well as in the deepest caves of his own self.

The *mūl mantra*, as an expression of Guru Nanak's intuitive insight into the metaphysical realm, presents and integrated view of the basic reality that is monistic, but whose manifestation is pluralistic. The conceptual framework of the *mantra* is comprehensive enough to include ten of the most significant attributes of the Absolute, the last two belonging to the realm of values with its humanistic import. The extent and magnitude of the non-temporal creative principle can scarcely be estimated by a phenomenal being subject to the space time order. Even the manifest aspect, namely, the physical universe of process of nature, defies measure and count. Perhaps, the Divine Person alone can contemplate the vastness and totality of the cosmic existence. Man, however, is fortunately placed in sharing capacity for the experience of this endless mystery. He may be well-advised to expand his mental universe so as to reflect, in an increasing measure, the vastness and magnitude of the reality of his philosophic contemplations. That would be the true meaning of 'cosmic consciousness' from the human point of view. It would be man's awareness of the entirety of Cosmic Being. Guru Nanak assures us that the light and grace of the Divine Enlightener are ever with man in his search.

A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE *MŪL MAṆṬRA*

Hardev Bahri

The *mūl maṇṭra* of Guru Nanak is composed of fourteen words only, and, at first sight, it does not offer much linguistic material to an analyst. A deep study, however, reveals a vast wealth of content which invites our attention.

The language of the *maṇṭra* is essentially bound with the philosophical and religious tradition of India. Though typically ancient, it has the stamp of Nanak's time and place. This would be evident from its phonological, lexical, grammatical, structural, stylistic and semantic features which will be detailed below.

Phonological Structure :

The *mūl maṇṭra* has all the vowels—short, long and diphthongal—that have come down to us from Old Indo-Aryan. We have 'a' and 'ā' in *akāl*, *Karatā*, *nām (u)*, *prasād (i)*; 'i' in *nirbhau*, *nirvair (u)* *ajūni*; 'u' and 'ū' in *purakh (u)*, *mūrat(i)*, *ajūni*; 'e' in *ek*; 'ai' in *nirvair (u)*; 'o' in *oamkār*; and 'au' in *nirbhau*. Of course 'a' and 'ā' predominate. In mystic philosophy 'a' is said to represent God—*akṣaraṇām akāro (a)smi*¹ and He permeates and dominates the whole universe. Linguistically too, 'a' is predominant as a vowel and it is inherent in all the consonants. It may be noted that we have taken the figure '1' as *ek* although it is pronounced as *ik* by Punjabi speakers. But considering the genius of the *Gurū Granth*, it is *ek*. 'Ik' occurs only 40 times and that too due to the exigencies of metre of rhyme; *ek*, on the other hand, occurs 1500 times in the *Gurū Granth*. *Ek* is traditional too.

Final 'i' in *sat (i)*, *mūrat(i)* and *prasād(i)* and final 'u' in *nām(u)*, *purakh(u)* and *nirvair (u)* are not pronounced by the *granthis*, and that also on account of their Punjabi tradition. These vowels were duly pronounced in such positions in Old Indo-Aryan and Middle Indo-Aryan

and even in the time of Guru Nanak and Guru Arjun Dev, because as we shall see later, they had their grammatical significance. They have existed finally in *Braja Bhāṣā* which greatly influenced the diction of *bhakta*-poets of middle ages. It is remarkable that although the written form of such words in the *Gurū Granth* has remained intact for the last four centuries, the pronunciation has changed. With all the rigidity and meticulousness, no generation can preserve the pronunciation even of the scriptures.

Of the consonants, 'k', 'r' and 's' are dominant. So is the case with our languages i.e. Punjabi. Only 'kh' and 'ph' from amongst aspirates and only 'n' and 'm' from amongst nasals are there. Perhaps, they are the oldest of their class in Indo-Aryan phonemes. It has been surmised by certain scholars that most of the aspirates and, probably 'v' and 'x' developed in later times. The mantra has no cerebral consonants, which, according to linguistic historians, did not originally exist in old Indo-Aryan and came up as the result of Dravidian influence. All other consonants are there. 'ṣ' is 'kh' in *purakh* (५). This is typically colloquial. Also compare Gurmukhi 'ਖ' and Nagari (५).

Conjunct consonants are too many to be contained in such a short mantra. But their incidence in our language is represented here by such words as *nirbhau*, *nirvair* (u) and *gur prasād(i)*, although Gurumukhi script does not properly show the ligature when 'r' is the first member of a conjunct. 'R' is clearly shown when it is the second member of a conjunct, as in *prasād(i)*.

Of the fourteen words, four—*sat(i)*, *nām(u)*, *gur* and *ek*—are pronounced as monosyllables, nine—*karatā*, *purakh(u)*, *oamīkār*, *nirbhau*, *nirvair(u)*, *akāl*, *mūrat(i)*, *saibham* and *prasād(i)* are disyllabic and *ajūni* is trisyllabic. According to the older pronunciation, the position would be different. More than three syllables are to be found only in compounds, as *sat(i) nām(u)*, *gurprasād(i)*, etc. If frequency counts of lexical syllables were available, we would say with certainty whether the above proportions also existed in our language.

Stress is initial in *sat(i)*, *nām(u)*, *karatā*, *purakh(u)*, and *mūrat(i)*

medial in *ajūnī*, *prasād(i)*, *nirvair(u)*, *nirbhau*, *oamkār* and final in *akāl*; and *saibham*.

Pauses are simple and rhythmic, occurring after every two words. Thus *ek oamkār*, *sat(i) nām(u)*, *karatā purakh(u)*, *nir-bhau*, *nirvair(u)*, *akāl mūrat(i)*, *ajūnī saibham*, *gur prasād(i)*. There is longer pause before, *gurprasād(i)* which three is a clear-cut sentence by itself.

Rhythmically *nirbhau* and *nirvair(u)* are two separate compound words. It may be noted that the stress in compounds *karatā purakh(u)*, *nirbhau*, *nirvair(u)*, *akāl mūrat(i)*, *gurprasād(i)* varies in western and eastern Punjabi. It is on the first element in eastern Punjabi and on the second element in western Punjabi.

A few more phonetic phenomena are noticeable in the following:

OIA *satya* had become *saćća* in Prākṛit and Apabhramsa and in Punjabi, too. The word *sati* shows that it is *tatsama*, only spelt as such, like *kāvya* as *kāvi*.

Meta-thesis of nasality from *saṁbhava* or *svayambhū* to *saibham* is interesting and shows local facility and folk tendency. *Bhau* from OIA *bhava* is common in western Punjabi, as in *čarhiā sau te latthā bhau* or in *nā đar nā bhau*.² *Ajūnī* from *ayonī* and *purakh(u)* from *puruṣa* also show Punjabization of OIA terms. *Sandhi* is seen in the words *nirbhau* and *nirvair(u)*.

Lexical Structure of the Mantara:

The following words are *tatsams*:

Nām(u), *karatā*, *nirvair(u)*, *akāl*, *prasād(i)*

We are not worried about the written forms here. *Mūrat(i)* and *ajūnī* are *semi-tatsamas*, and *saibham*, *purakh(u)* and *bhau* are *tadbhavas*. There is no *desī* or foreign word, perhaps because such sources do not provide any philosophical concepts vis-a-vis Indian traditional thought.

The language is called *Sadhukarī*, as the Sadhus of the period naturally spoke mixed language. The mantra has a balanced mixture of *tatsamas*, *semi-tatsamas*, and *tadbhavas*. The mantra contains some of the most important terms which have become institutions in Sikh religion. viz. *ek*, *karatā*, *karatār*, *nām(u)*, *sat(i)nām(u)*, *akāl*, *gurū* and *prasād(i)*.

We shall refer to the significance of these terms later in our paper.

Prefixes for word-making used herein are 'a' in *akāl* and *ajūnī*, 'nir' in *nirbhau* and *nirvair(u)*, and 'pra' in *prasās(i)*. Suffixes form the words *karatā*, *sat(i)*, *mūrat(i)*, *ajūnī* and *prasād(i)*. *Karatā purakh(ū)*, *nirbhau nirvair(u)*, *gurprasād(i)*, *saibham* and *akāl* have a number of compounding phenomena—determinative, appositional, propositional and attributive.

Grammar:

The mantra is in sutra form, and does not contain much grammatical data. The following parts of speech may be considered:

Nouns : Masculine—*Oamār*, *nām(u)*, *karatā*, *purakh(u)*.
 Feminine—*mūrat(i)*.

It may be noted that final 'u' shows masculine singular form in direct case and final 'i' feminine singular form in direct case.

Adjective : *ek*, *sat (i)*, *nirbhau*, *akāl*, *ajūnī*, *saibham*. It is a well known fact that adjective can be used as nouns.

Pronouns : 'He' and 'is attained' are implicit.

Verbs : 'Is' and 'is attained' are understood by context.

Adverbial phrase : *gur prasād(i)*. i.e. by the grace of preceptor.

There are no markers, but 'i' at the end of *prasād(i)* is a declensional termination, meaning 'by' or 'with'. Also compare *gur prasaād(i) āpan āp(u) sujhai*³ and *gur parasādi pār(i) utarai*.⁴

Here 'i' termination is instrumental as well as ablative. In *jiu purkhai ghar(i) bhagti nār(i) hai*.⁵ 'i' with *ghar* is locative.

Thus, the use of 'i' in the *mūl mantra* is very significant.

Stylistic Structure:

It is difficult to say whether the *mūl mantra* is in prose or in verse. The entire *Gurū Granth* is poetical. As stated earlier, it has a rhythm of its own. And, if rhythm is the most important factor in poetry, the piece is poetical, indeed. But all poetry of the time and all poetry in the *Gurū Granth* is in rhymes. This one is not.

The mantra has nine phrases, rather sentence, which are apparently dependent but actually independent units which we have previously called rhythmic units.

Semantics of the Mantra:

It is a wonderful fact that each word of the *mūl mantra* is explained in the *Gurū Granth* itself. In fact, the *Gurū Granth* is, by and large, a commentary of this *mantra*. Hence the word *mūl* (fundamental) is rightly prefixed to it.

Ek means My Lord is one and only one.⁶ It is an essential of *bhakti*. Devotion to God has to be undivided, otherwise, there can be no concentration, no meditation. The conception of oneness of God is recognised in all theistic philosophical systems. Even those, who worship or tolerate a number of gods, say that it is the One who manifests Himself in various gods. This the most prominent of pantheistic believers, believes in *ek bharoso ek bal, ek ās biśvās*⁷ i.e., one prop, one support, one hope and one faith. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva according to such saints, are not three, but one.

1 (one) as a figure is very important. We start counting with one. The universe started with that one and it is the starting point in Guru Nanak's philosophy, too. It is the first symbol in the *Gurū Granth* and the teachings of all the Gurus are based on it.

The figure '1' pervades all the figures, and there can be no conception of multiplicity into hundreds and thousands and millions without 'one'. Similarly, it is that one God who pervades all animatic and inanimate beings and who reproduces Himself in millions and billions of them. *Ekameva advitiyam Brahma*⁸—*Oamkār eko rav(i) rahiā*...⁹

All other figures have segments, but the figure '1' is indivisible. So is God.

Oamkār is *oam*. *Varṇat kārāh*, i.e., the suffix *kār* signifies that the proceeding letter is a sound, as *akār* means 'a' sound *makār* means 'm' sound and so on. *Oam* offers a large number of interpretations and affords a rich linguistic material.

Oamkār sat(i) nām(u) means *Oam* is the truest name of God. It is

accepted as such by Vedas, Upanishads, *Gītā*, Puranas, Tantras, and by the Buddhists, Parsis, Christians, Muslims, and Sikhs. *Svāstika*, which is an emblem of the divine in Peru, Mexico and Egypt, is in fact a form of *Oam* thus:



Oam is the object of profound meditation, the highest spiritual efficacy being attributed not only to the whole symbol but also to the three elements—*a, u, m*. *A* is for Shiva, ‘*o*’ for Vishnu and ‘*m*’ for Brahmā. That was the puranic significance attached to the elements of *Oam*. Guru had this triad in view. Hence he had to add the restrictive adjective ‘*ek*’. Thus ‘*ek Oam*’ shows the union of three gods in one.

Ekākṣrikoṣa say that:

A stands for *agni*, *virāt* and *viśva*.

O stands for *Hiraṇyagarbha*, *vāyu* and *taijas*.

M stands for *Īśvar*, *āditya* and *prajñā*

Agni means omniscient and fit to be realized, from *añch* to know, to realize. He is the first cause of knowledge and all that is known through knowledge. *Virāt* (from *Vi* + *rāt* to illuminate) means one who illuminates the Universe.

Viśva (from *viś*, to reside) is one in whom all the worlds and worldly objects dwell and who dwells in all of them.

Hiraṇyagarbha is one who is the support and source (*garbha*) of all light (*Hiraṇya*).

Vāyu is the life of the universe.

Taijas (from *teja*, energy) is one who is resplendent and gives energy.

He is *Īśvar* because His power (*Īśa*) is infinite.

Āditya (from *ā* not *di*, to decay) is one who never dies or decays.

He is *prajñā* or knowledge, it self i.e. *jñānasarūp*.

Oam is derived from *av*, which according to *Dhātupāṭha* treatises on Sanskrit roots, means to protect, to move, to know, to shine, to bless,

to fill, to reside, to do, to desire, to kill, to give, to grow, etc. He is the protector, mover, doer, giver, killer, and all-knowing, resplendent, pleasing and all-pervading. The *Gurū Granth* sings in so many hymns these qualities of God.

It may be noted that the word '*Oam*' is never inflected. Unlike other names of God, it has no gender, no number, no case. That is why the philosophers have believed that *Oam* is the real name of God. Even the word '*Brahma*' is in neuter gender.

Oam is pronounced as *AUM*, where *A* is the first letter of Indian alphabets excepting Gurmukhi in which it is *OAM*, *O* being the first letter of Gurmukhi alphabet.

The three sounds of *AUM* were marked by ancient philosophers as the first creation of the Supreme Being. The ocean, the earth, the day and the night and the living beings were created later.¹⁰

We know that there are five simple vowels in OIA—*a*, *i*, *u*, *ṛī* (ऋ) and *īṛ* (ॠ). '*A*' occurs initially and '*U*' medially in vowels, and '*m*' comes at the end of consonantal classes. Thus *AUM* exists initially, medially and finally, i.e. in all positions, *ādi madh(i) ant(i) nirāṅkāraṁ*.¹¹ He is omnipresent.

'*A*' is inherent in all consonants which usually cannot be pronounced without the aid of '*a*' which itself is indivisible and basic so is God. It is also said that '*a*' represents God *akṣarāṇām akāro-(a)smi*¹² and '*u*' represents soul or spirit. Both are vowels i.e. free. According to some, '*u*' is *Om*. Consonants are bound, so is *maya* which, they say, is represented by '*m*'.

'*A*' is guttural and '*m*' labial. In uttering *AUM*, we cover the whole range of vocal cavity which represents *ākāśa*, sky, which is also a name of *Brahma* who is *sunna* or *sūnya*.

So much about God and his name *AUM*. Guru Nanak now proceeds to define His nature.

God is *sat(i)* (*satya*), true, real. God is truth—one and the same in all ages and in all places. *Sat(i)* has a number of meanings in Sanskrit. It

denotes 'existing'. God exists while all other things cease to exist. God, alone is immortal. *Sat(i)* also means enduring, reverable and good. *Sat(i)* is essence or substance, too. In *Mīmāṃsā* Philosophy, *sat(i)* is an essential quality of God as opposed to *guṇa* or accidental quality of *maya*. *Maya* is *sagūṇa*, while God is *nirguṇa*. In Vedāntic Philosophy, *sat(i)* is self-existent universal spirit. The well-known *mūl maṇṭra* of Vedāntis is 'Om tatsat', i.e. God is the same (in all conditions), true, good, immortal and *nirguṇa*.

Nām(u) is a simple word, meaning 'name' or 'name-bearer' i.e. God has several names. *Sat(i) nām(u)* may be explained in various ways:

1. His name is true—*Sat(i) nām(u) Prabh kā sukhadāi*,¹³ the name of God is blissful. Other names are false, because they do not fully represent the qualities of a person, place or thing.
2. He is true, good, etc., and is known by several names.
3. He is truth *nirguṇa* indeed—*nām(u)*.
4. He is called *nām(u)*, truth, etc.
5. *Nām(u)*, *śabda* (word) is true. It refers to *śabdasādhana* which is propounded in detail in the *Gurū Granth* and Sant literature.

On account of its significance and importance, *sat(i)-nām(u)* has become a full *maṇṭra* among Sikhism : *Namsakār gurdev ko sat(i) nām(u) jis maṇṭra sunāiā*.¹⁴

The frequency of *nām(u)* is greatest of all words in the Scriptures. It occurs 3500 times in the *Gurū Granth*.

If we read 'ek oamkār *sat(i) nām(u)*' as one phrase, it would mean, 'only Om is the true name'.

Karatā hoi janāvai,¹⁵ i.e. *karatā* is creator (*sirjaṇhār*) of the universe. The root *kr* means 'to do', 'make' and *karatā* means 'doer' or 'maker'. He is free in doing anything, *karaṇ kārāṇ samarath(u) hai kahu Nānak bīchār(i)*.¹⁶ He is omnipotent.

The word *karatā* and its equivalents—*karatār*, *karanhār*, *sirjaṇhār* and other occur in about 2000 contexts in the *Gurū Granth*.

Purakh(u) is from Sanskrit. *puruṣa* which is derived from the root *pā* (पा पालयति) to protect, to bring out, to excel, to keep alive, to be able to, to overcome; or from *pr* (प्र) to fill, to overspread, to nourish, to grant a wish, to satisfy. These acts are performed by God alone. There is a chapter in the *Rig Veda*, called *Puruṣa Sūkta*, which explains all these virtues of God, and defines the creative force of God.

Purakh(u) according to Upanishads, means, soul or spirit. It also means 'man' who created in the very image of God. Thus the word itself connotes the oneness of God, soul, and *jiva* the *Advaitvāda* (doctrine of non-duality) of Indian Philosophy.

Puruṣa can be derived from *puru*, abundant, far and wide. God is *paripūrṇa*, perfect, self-contained, and exists everywhere.

According to another etymologist the word is split up into *purā* (पुरा of yore), an *uṣ* (उष to burn); *purakh(u)* is one, who burns all the sins and *guṇas* before creation. He is *nirlipta*, unadhered and unattached.

Now, Guru Nanak proceeds to define the negative characteristics of his God. His is *nirbhau*, without fear, *nirvair(u)* without enmity, *akāl mūrat(i)*, deathless in form and *ajūni*, does not come in births and rebirths.

Fear is the nature of a bodied being because a being had self-interests, jealousies and attachments. The body has to be protected from the fears of wind, heat and cold, fire and water, disease, oldage and death. But God is bodiless, unaging and immortal. He is the unselfish one.

He does not distress or alarm anyone. He is neither hostile nor revengeful to anybody. He is a true friend and all love. As He has no jealousies and no interests, He has no enmity.

*Samo-a-ham sarvabhūteṣu.*¹⁷

He is *akāl* or *avināśi*. *Kāl* also means 'time'. God is beyond the limits of time and space. He has no beginning, no end. He is *anād(i)*, *anant*. *Akāl* may mean 'before there'. God existed before time, before the birth of day and night, before the creation of sun and stars. That is His true *mūrat(i)*, form. *Mūrat(i)* also means existence. His existence knows no begining, no end.

God is *ajūnī*, non-placental, unborn. He has no mother or father and He does not enter the 84 lakh births and rebirths, because He is *nirguṇa*, *trih(u) guṇ te Prabh bhinn*.¹⁸ He is free from *maya*.

Ajūni is further explained in the word *saibham*, from *svayambhu* self-born:

Thāpiā na jāi kitā nā hoi.

Āpe āp(i) nirānjan(u) soi.¹⁹

He is not created, but is self-created. *Bhu* also means 'to shine'. He is *svayam-bhu*, self-resplendent. He does not receive light from any other source, and He is the fountain head of all light.²⁰

Tis de chanaṇ(i) sabh mah(i) chanaṇ(u) hoi.

Ajūni saibham may be *ajūnī-sambhava*, i.e. not born of any source.

It is a striking feature of Nanak's *mūl mantra* that it is all *stuti* or *nām-kīrtan*, a hymn of His praise. There is no *prārthanā* or prayer. Nothing is asked of God. The *mantra* just explains what God is. It also points out implicitly that the realm of man is to be one with Him. Indirectly, it defines also the qualities of devotee, who is not at all different from God. A devotee and, in fact, a man should be *akāl mūrat(i)*, the very form of God who is *akāl purakh(u)*. And he should be fearless, truthful and friendly to everybody. He has to cast himself in God's image and likeness. Then he will become *ajūnī*, free from births and rebirths.

But, how to become one with Him or how to attain salvation? The answer is *gur-prasād(i)* by the grace of a preceptor or teacher.

Gur prasād(i) āpan āp(u) sūjhai.²¹

By the grace of Guru, He will become self-evident, He will appear. 'Guru' means heavy, high, great, venerable, preceptor. It may refer to a human teacher or to God. In the *Gurū Granth*, it generally refers to both, but mostly to God. However, there is no difference between the two.

According to letterists, 'gu' means darkness and 'rū' remover, *Gurū* is one who removes darkness, *maya*, ignorance or false conception. He sheds light on the path leading to heights called salvation, *nirvāṇa*, *brahmapada*. Our minds are overcast with *guṇas*, evils and attachments

that bind us to maya below. The guru removes these evils, washes away the dirt, cleans the mind of all impurities and unites it with the Purest and the Supreme.

We need his grace, his kindness, *prasād(i)* to achieve God or even to become godly persons.

NOTES

- 1 ਅਕਸ਼ਰਾਣਾਸਕਾਰੋऽਸਿ । *Bhagvad Gītā*, 10.33
- 2 ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਸੈ ਤੇ ਲੱਥਾ ਭੋ, ਨਾ ਡਰ ਨਾ ਭੋ। Proverb
- 3 ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਆਪਨ ਆਪੁ ਸੁਝੈ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 281
- 4 ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਪਾਰਿ ਉਤਰੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1161
- 5 ਜਿਉ ਪੁਰਖੈ ਘਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਹੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1413
- 6 ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ॥ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 350
- 7 ऐक भरोसो एक बल एक आस बिश्वास । Tulsi, *Kavitāvālī*, p. 277
- 8 एकमेव अदिवतीयं ब्रह्म ।
- 9 ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਏਕੋ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ...॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 1310
- 10 *Rig Veda* X, 190
- 11 ਆਦਿ ਮਧਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੰ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 250
- 12 ਅਕਸ਼ਰਾਣਾਸਕਾਰੋऽਸਿ *Bhagvad Gītā*, 10.33
- 13 ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਾ ਸੁਖਦਾਈ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 284
- 14 ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਕੋ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਜਿਸ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ॥ *Vārān Bhāi Gurdās*, I.1
- 15 ਕਰਤਾ ਹੋਇ ਜਨਾਵੈ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 215
- 16 ਕਰਣ ਕਾਰਣ ਸਮਰਥੁ ਹੈ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 148
- 17 सम्मोऽहं सर्वभूतेशु. *Bhagavad Gītā*, 9-29
- 18 ਤਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭੋਨ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 283
- 19 ਬਾਪਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ॥ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਜੋਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 2
- 20 ਤਿਸ ਦੇ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 13
- 21 ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਆਪਨ ਆਪੁ ਸੁਝੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 281

GOD OF THE *MŪL MANTRA* AND THE *VEDA* : A COMPARATIVE STUDY

B.B. Chaubey

Before proceeding to compare the contents of *mūl mantra* with that of the Veda, it is desirable that we explain what we mean by 'mantra'. The term 'mantara' is derived from *man*, 'to say'¹ with the suffix *tran*, which means 'a spoken word'. Verbal expression having been conceived in the form of poetry, prose or song, we find, in Sanskrit literature three terms, namely, *ṛk*², *yajuṣ*³ and *sāman*⁴ respectively. These terms were regarded as three kinds of mantras in the vedic terminology. Throughout the Saṁhita period we find the term mantra referring to the above-said three terms. In the Brahmanic period, too, the term signified the same three things. In the *sūtra* period the word 'mantra' began to be applied for those *ṛks*, *yajuṣ* and *sāmans* which were uttered at the time of the performance of rituals only. The utterances of the mantras were supposed to remind the priests concerned of the procedures relating to the rituals to be performed⁵. In the later period the term mantra acquired somewhat mysterious meaning—any sacred formula which was silently repeated with a view to attain a certain goal was called a mantra, an incantation or a spell. When it was employed by 'black' or 'white' magic, it was treated as a charm. Yaska derives the term mantra from *man*, which means to think. Yaska's derivation of the word mantra⁶ suits both the meanings. Thus, according to the Vedic concept every *ṛk*, *yajuṣ* or *sāman* is a mantra, while according to the later concept only a sacred formula consisting of a few words, sometimes without meaning, form a mantra. In the later period brevity became an essential feature of a mantra and this is the fundamental difference between the Vedic and post-Vedic mantras. The *mūl mantra* like many other mantras, such as *Om namah śivāya* etc., represents the later concept.

In this latter category of mantras we find two types of mantras, viz. *guru mantra* and *mūl mantra*. A mantra uttered thrice in the right ear of a disciple at the time of his initiation is called *guru mantra*. However Guru Nanak's mantra was not a *guru mantra* in the strict sense of the word, as it was not given to him by any Guru in his ear at the time of his initiation. Guru Nanak Dev himself was the original seer of this mantra known as *mūl mantra* or *bij mantra*. A mantra, which is repeated in silence but counted by means of beads of a rosary held in hand, is called *jap mantra*.

Before undertaking discussion about the deity of a mantra in general and that of *mūl mantra* in particular we would like to see the purport of *mūl mantra*.

The figure ੴ (one) before *Oamkār* in the *mūl mantra* is to emphasize that God is one, rejecting, thereby, the concept of plurality of the gods.⁷ Though He manifests Himself in this universe under various forms, yet He is not many. He is One alone, the diversity is the result of his maya.⁸ Just as the figure ੴ is all pervasive and goes on increasing by ten without losing its shape or value if a zero is added to it; similarly God is One and pervades the entire universe. That God is *Oamkār*; He is true (*sat*); He is the doer of all (*karatā*); He is present in every one (*purakh (u)*); He is fearless (*nirbhau*); He is foeless (*nirvair(u)*); He is neither bound by the limit of time (*akāl mūrat(i)*); nor that of place (*ajūni*); He is self-made (*saibham*); and can be known only through the grace of a great Guru, *gur prāsad(i)*. In my opinion, this mantra contains the gist of knowledge as available in the Vedas and Upanishads. Very frequently, we meet with these attributes of God in the Vedas, and in the Upanishads. About the oneness of God, *Rig Veda* declares that the Ultimate Reality is truly one and one alone but the pedants call him by different names such as Agni, Yama⁹ and so on. He who was the sole God among all the gods.¹⁰ Mantras containing references to monotheistic tendency in the Vedic religion are frequently met with in the philosophic hymns of the *Rig Veda*. The one God is sometimes said to be *Puruṣa*, sometimes *Hiraṇyagarbha* and sometimes *Viśvakarmān*.¹¹ About the oneness of God *Atharva Veda* says:

To him who knoweth this, God is simple and one: neither second nor third, nor yet fourth He is called; He is called neither fifth, nor sixth, nor yet the seventh; He is called neither eight, nor ninth, nor yet the tenth. He watheth over creatures. all that breatheth and breatheth not. This conquering might hath entered Him He is the sole, the simple one, the one alone. In him these deities become simple and one.¹²

In the Four Samhitas of the Vedas we do not find the description of God as *Om*. However, in the Upanishads the Supreme Brahman is said to be *Om*. In the *Kathopanishad* when Nachiketa, the ideal student-*Brahmachārī*, persisted on asking Yama to enlighten him on the question of the Ultimate Reality, the latter after a great deal of research to ascertain Nachiketa's eligibility for acquiring such secret doctrine revealed the Ultimate Truth in the following words:

The word which all the Vedas meditate upon, which manifold asceticism and austerity aim at, and aspiring after which the sages observe celibacy, I reveal to thee, now O Nachiketa, in a nutshell, that the secret mystic word in '*Om*'.¹³

Yama further declares that verily this *Om* is *apāra* Brahman also *pār* Brahman. He who knows this *akṣara* Brahman attains whatever he desires. Verily this '*Om*' is the highest as well as the excellent support (*ālamban*).¹⁴ By knowing of that support one is honoured in the *Brahmaloka*. In the *Praśnopaniṣad* Pippalada speaks to Garga:

O my child, he who knows the shadowless, bodyless, bloodless and pure *akṣara* Brahman, viz. '*Om*' he attains the Supreme Brahman. By knowing this '*Om*' in whom all souls breathe and all the gods rest one becomes omniscient.¹⁵

Further Pippalada says to Satyakama, the son of Shiv that *Oamkār* is *pāra* and *apāra* Brahman.¹⁶ Shankara commenting on this mantra observes that being the symbol of *pāra* and *apāra* Brahman, *Om* is indeed the form of Supreme Brahman.¹⁷ *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad* of the *Atharva Veda* says that verily this *Om* is everything; past, present and future, all are the expositions of *Om*. *Om*, which is beyond the domain of time.¹⁸

Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad further tells us that the word 'Om', being the symbol of supreme God, comprises of three letters,¹⁹ *a*, *u* and *m*. 'A' the first syllable, represents the *vaiśvānara* of the wakeful- state (*jāgrta avasthā*)²⁰, 'u' the second letter, represents the *tejas* of dream-state (*swapna avasthā*)²¹ and 'm' the third letter, represents the *pragya* of the state of unconsciousness (*susupti avasthā*).²²

In the literature of *Sāma Veda* the significance of 'Om' has been discussed in detail. In the *Jaiminiyopaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* (*J.U.B.*) it is said that Prajapati created the earth, the aerial region and the heaven from the *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Sāma Veda* respectively. Again, he created, *Agni*, *Vāyu* and *Āditya* from the earth, aerial region and heaven respectively. *Bhūh* i.e. earth is the essence of the *Rig Veda*; aerial region is the essence of *Yajur Veda* and *Dyuloka* is the essence of *Sāma Veda*. Prajapati could not squeeze off the essence of *Om* when it became the representative of *Vāk*.²³ Verily *Om* is *Agni* : *Om* is *Vāyu* and *Om* is *Āditya*. *J.U.B.* further says that Prajapati attempted to squeeze three Vedas, but he could not extract *Om*.²⁴ Verily *Om* is *Sāma*; *Om* is mind (*manas*); *Om* is *Prāna*; *Om* is *Indra* and *Vāk* is all the gods.²⁵ *Om* is said to be the essence of all learning. *J.U.B.* says that Prajapati extracted *trayīvidyā* (three-fold knowledge) from the Vedas. The sap which was extracted from that became three *vyāhrtiān*, viz. *bhūh*, *bhuvah* and *svāh*. Again he squeezed the *vyāhrtiān* and the sap which came out of that was *Om*.²⁶ *Om* is the support of three-fold knowledge. It is *Om* which supports *hotā*, *adhvaryu* and the *udgātā*.²⁷ *Om* is immortal and imperishable. *Om* is Supreme Brahman in whom all the Universe rests. All the creatures rest on earth; the earth rests on water and the water ultimately rests on *Om*. As leaves are perforated, with a needle, likewise with the *Om* all the Universe is penetrated.²⁸ Prithu, the son of Vena asked the divine *Vrātyās* to tell him what the support of water and everything else was. The divine *Vrātyās* inform him that it was Truth, i.e. *Om* itself, which was the support of water and all else.²⁹

How should *Om* be pronounced, is a question discussed in some scriptures, *J.U.B.* says that some pronounce *Om* as if it were a single syllable. But it is not correct. He who takes it to be a single syllable

deprives himself of the benefits of its utterance.³⁰ Some take it as a word of two-syllables and some others pronounce *o* and *u*. It should be pronounced or sung as *Ūm* alone. By pronouncing *Om* correctly as *Ūm* one makes the chant charming.³¹

The worship of different syllables of *Om* is said to yield different fruits to the worshipper. *Om* is the Supreme Brahman, hence, whoever meditates on *Om*, as such, attains the Brahman. Here some doubt may arise about the fact that since *pāra* Brahman cannot be described by words and has no attributes, he cannot be meditated on merely by mind. Shankara says that *Om* is the symbol of that *pāra* Brahman, hence by meditation on *Om* one can attain the Supreme Brahman.³² The word *Om* consists of three syllables, viz. *a*, *u* and *m*. He who meditates upon the first syllable, even without knowing of syllables, at once attains this world because of the effectiveness of *Om*. The *ṛks* which 'a' represents, leads him to the human world, where he is endowed with penance, celibacy and faith and experiences his greatness.³³ He who meditates upon the two syllables of *Om*, viz., *a* and *u* is led by the *yajus* to the *Somaloka* i.e., aerial region, but comes back again to the human world.³⁴ He who meditates upon *Om*'s three syllables, attains the abode of *Sūrya*. He, who meditates upon *Om* clearly with all the three syllables correctly uttered, becomes purified of all sins committed by him, just as a serpent becomes rejuvenated after casting off its slough and is led by *samans* to the *Brahmaloka*. There he experiences a direct vision with *Param Puruṣa* seated in his heart.³⁵ But Pippalada speaks differently on this context. He tells Satyakama that the three syllables of *Om* if separately pronounced, would perish leaving no effect behind. Therefore, he says, they must not be pronounced separately, but as one single unbreakable unit.³⁶ By *ṛk* one attains this world, by *yajus* the aerial region and by *saman* that world which the wise alone can know. But he, who realising this fully sings *Om*, crosses all the three worlds.³⁷ By uttering the syllable *Om*, he puts *āditya* in his mouth and attains all. For him everything becomes conquered, nothing remains unattained.

From the foregoing discussion on *Om*, it becomes clear that in the Upanishadic literature, *Om* was regarded as the mystic symbol of Supreme

Brahman. Hence, it was in the fitness of things that Guru Nanak Dev, after having realised the true significance of *Oamkār* owned it as the name of the Supreme Spirit.

Another name which finds mention in the *mūl mantra* is *sat(i)*. It is one of the most common designations applied to the Supreme God. *Sat(i)* means Truth. It is derived from *as* (अस्) to be, God is *Sat(i)*, because it is He, who exists for ever. In the Upanishadic literature the concept of God as Truth is a predominant concept. The truthfulness is the common characteristic of Vedic gods. Madhuchhanda, the seer of the first ten hymns of the *Rig Veda*, describes *Agni* as *satya*.³⁸ Gritsamada, the seer of the second *maṇḍala*, confidently says that *Indra* is *satya*.³⁹ It seems that in the beginning of Vedic mythology every god who was assumed to have been the personification of any phenomenon of nature, had this attribute. Later on, when the monotheistic tendency became prominent, the word *satya* became the chief attribute of the supreme Spirit and names, such as *Agni*, *Mitra*, *Varuna*, *Indra*, *Vishnu* and so on, were taken to be different attributes or names of one and the same Reality. *Rig Veda* declares: 'The wise men call the One by different names such as *Agni*, *Yama*, *Mātariśvān* and so on'.⁴⁰

In the *mūl mantra*, Guru Nanak Dev assigns some attributes to God. The first attribute is that of being *kartā*, the Creator. God is the Creator of the Universe. The notion was not a new thing. The entire Vedic literature is full of such expressions which tell us that God is the Creator of the Universe. In the well-known *Hiraṇyagarbha Sūkta* of the *Rig Veda*, *Prajāpati* is said to have created the earth, atmosphere, heaven, water and everything in the universe.⁴¹ In the creation hymn of the *Rig Veda*, the sun, the moon, the earth, the heaven and the atmosphere, all are said to have been created by God.⁴² Brahman as *pati*, like a black-smith, is said to have expanded the universe.⁴³ In the *Atharva Veda* the earth, the atmosphere and the heaven are said to have been fixed by Brahman.⁴⁴ In the *Kaṭhopanishad* it is said that it is the Almighty God who makes the universe in diverse forms.⁴⁵ There are innumerable references in the Upanishads which tell us that God is the Creator of the Universe.

The next attribute of God in the *mūl mantra* is *purakh(u)* (= *puruṣa*). Yaska derives the word *puruṣa* from *pur* or *puram* + λ si to lie.⁴⁶ The word *puruṣa* is used for the individual soul as well as for the universal soul. In the *mūl mantra* it stands for the latter. The word *puruṣa* as an attribute or a designation of God is frequently met with in Vedic literature. In the well-known *Puruṣa Sūkta* of the *Rig Veda* *puruṣa* is described as the sole cause of the universe. Everything of the universe is said to have emanated from the *Puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* is said to have possessed innumerable heads, eyes, and feet. He is so great that having pervaded the whole earth, He remains ten fingers beyond the earth.⁴⁷ Whatever has been and whatever shall be, is said to be *Puruṣa*. He is the Lord of Immortality.⁴⁸ It is not that this much is His greatness. He is greater than this. All the being put together would become only one fourth of the *Puruṣa*. His three-fourth, which is immortal, is in heaven.⁴⁹ The *Aitareya Āraṇ Yaka* (*Ait. Ār.*) has described the *vibhūti* of *Puruṣa*.⁵⁰ The *Śukla Yajur Veda* says that *Puruṣa* is all-pervading and brilliantly shining like the sun beyond the darkness.⁵¹ The *Śvetāśvetaropaniṣad* says that there is nothing subtler nor bigger than *Puruṣa*. He stands alone, high and motionless, like a tree.⁵² The whole universe is pervaded by Him. He impells the internal organs to attain the purest and the highest bliss. He is the controller of all; He is the eternal light.⁵³ He is the internal self (*aṅtarātmā*) of all. He resides in the heart of all living beings.⁵⁴ Handless and footless. He yet holds everything and moves far away with speed; having no eyes He sees; having no ears He hears; He knows all that is worth knowing, but there is no one that knows Him. The wise men call him *puruṣa*.⁵⁵

Another attribute of God in the *mūl mantra* is *nirbhau* i.e. fearless. Death is the greatest fear of man. But God is not afraid of death because he is beyond it. In the well-known *Hiraṇyagarbha Sūkta* of the *Rig Veda*, immortality and death are said to be the two shadows of God.⁵⁶ The *Atharva Veda* says that He is death itself; He is immortal.⁵⁷ In the *Kāthopaniṣad* it is said that if fire burns, the sun shines; Indra, Vayu and even death do their work, because of His fear.⁵⁸

Other attributes of God in the *mūl mantra* are *niravair(u)*, *akāl*

mūrat(i), *ajūni* and *saibham*. These attributes of God are also very frequently met with in the Upanishads. God, being the Creator, is the Father of all. He is an affectionate father having equal love for all. He is not bound by the limits of time. He is *Mahākāla*. *Śvetāśvetaropaniṣad* calls him '*Kālākāla*' i.e. God is time itself and at the same time beyond the time.⁵⁹ A thing bound by the time is bound to perish. But God is immortal; therefore He is not bound by the time.⁶⁰ In the *Atharvaveda* (XIX. 53-54) time itself has been regarded as God, because it is eternal. We call it past, present and future only in relation to human existence. When Guru Nanak calls God as *Akāl* there is not the least contradiction with the concept of God as *Kāla* as described in the *Atharvaveda* or as *Mahākāla* as called in the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*. When Nanak calls God as *Akāl*, he means God is not limited in the man-made time-scales. Being the first cause of the universe He is not the effect of any cause. The *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* says that there is none above Him. He is the sole cause; None is His creator.⁶¹ *Īsopaniṣad* says that God is everywhere; He is self-made;

He is the creator of every thing.⁶²

From the foregoing discussion on the concept of God as manifested in the *mūl mantra* and that in the passages cited from the Vedic texts it is clear that Guru Nanak's concept of Godhead was mainly Upanishadic, rather than Samhitic and Brahmanic. In the Samhitas and the Brahmanas, though the monotheistic tendency is there, polytheistic tendency is more common. Moreover, the Samhitic and Brahmanic religions were purely *pravṛttimūlaka* whereas the Upanishadic religion was being dominated by *nivṛttimūlaka* outlook, though not entirely devoid of *pravṛttimūlaka* tendency. Both polytheistic and *pravṛttimūlaka* tendencies keeping pace together, later on gave rise to the Puranic religion which believed in the plurality of gods. On the other hand the Upanishads, emphasizing the necessity of *nivṛttimārga*, were advocating the oneness of Godhead. Guru Nanak Dev accepted the Godhead of the Vedic religion in general, but the epithets and attributes which he applied to Godhead in the *mūl mantra* were mainly Upanishadic. However, he did not say anything in the *mūl mantra*, against the polytheism of the Vedas.

It is warranted by tradition that every mantra must have a deity. Yaksa, the author of *Nirukta*, has laid down some principles to determine the deity of a mantra. According to him, when a seer with certain ambition addresses a mantra to a deity in whom he sees the fulfilment of his desires, he is regarded as the deity of that mantra.⁶³ *Mūl mantra*, being a mantra should also have a deity. Now we shall see who the deity of *mūl mantra* is. *Oamkār*, as the symbol of Supreme Brahman, appears to be and has so far been regarded, as the Chief deity of *mūl mantra*. However, I do not agree with this view, in my humble opinion it is the Guru who is the chief deity of this mantra. The mantra is divided into two parts. *Ek oamkār sat (i) nām(u) karatā purakh(u) nirbhau nirvair(u) akāl mūrat(i) ajūni saibham* is one part and '*gurprasād(i)*' is the second part. In the first part of the mantra the seer, Guru Nanak, gives in brief the description of the Brahman as he understood Him. His concept of Brahman is clear in this mantra. Elsewhere, in his *bāṇī* he has elaborated his concept of Brahman.

According to Guru Nanak Dev, Supreme Brahman can be made known only through the grace of the Guru. In this *mūl mantra* Guru Nanak Dev is emphasizing on the greatness of the Guru. At one place he says that I have lost my ignorance by the grace of the Guru and now wherever I see, I perceive only Lord.⁶⁴ According to Guru Nanak Dev, Guru deserves the highest place in the religious hierarchy. It is he who engenders our love for God.⁶⁵ He is so gracious that he forgives our sins and errors when we surrender to him.⁶⁶

The Supremacy of the Guru was advocated not only by Guru Nanak Dev but also by all his contemporary saints and preachers. Emphasizing the supremacy of the Guru, Kabir says:

*Guru Govind doū khare kāke lāgūn pāya.
Balihārī Gurū āpane Govind diyo batāya.*⁶⁷

Both the Guru and the Govinda are standing before me; to whom should I bow down first. May I be a sacrifice for the thanks the Guru who made Govinda known to me. Almost all the saints of *Nirguṇa bhaktidhārā* put much stress on the importance of the Guru.⁶⁸

Moreover, the *mūl mantra* is also known as *guru mantra*. It is so

called because the Guru is the chief deity to the *mūl*. The mantra is named after its deity; for example. (R.V.I.I.I) is called *Agneva mantra* because the chief deity of this mantra is *Agni*.⁶⁹ Therefore, in my double opinion, the Guru should be regarded as the deity of Guru Nanak's *mūl mantra*. The followers of Guru Nanak Dev, realized the importance of Guru in their religious pursuit. They called Nanak Dev their Guru and they became known as his *śiṣyas* which is pronounced as Sikh. The Sikh religion is based on this *Gurū śiṣya paramparā*, whose source can be traced in the Upanishadic literature.⁷⁰

To conclude we may say that there is a great harmony between the *mūl mantra* and the Veda. The *mūl mantra* is the gist of the Upanishadic knowledge.

NOTES

- 1 B.R. Sharma, 'On man in the *Rigveda*', *Deccan College Research Institute Bulletin*, Poona, Vol. 25; 'Mantra in the *Rigveda*', *Visheshvaranand Indological Journal*, March, 1971.
- 2 तेषामन्यत्रार्थवशेन पादव्यवस्था । J.M.S. II. 1.35
- 3 शेषे यजुष् शब्दः या न गीतिर्न च पादबद्धं तत् प्रष्टिपठितं यजुः ।
Ibid., II.1.37; Sabhar on J.M.S. II. 1.35
- 4 गीतिषु समाख्या J.M.S. II. 1.36
- 5 तेऽनुष्ठानस्मारकादी संज्ञाशब्दं प्रयुज्यते ।
Mādhavāchārya, J.N.V. II. 1.23 Vide Sāyana's *Rigveda Bhāṣya Bhūmikā*.
- 6 मन्त्राः मननात् Nirukta, VII. 12
- 7 साहिबु मेरा ऐकै है॥ ऐकै है भाਈ ऐकै है॥ Gurū Granth, p. 350
साहिबु मेरा ऐकै है अवतु नही भाਈ॥ Ibid., p. 420
- 8 आपे आपि निरंजन जनि आपु छुपाएआ॥
आपे खेले रचाएछिन सबु जगजु सबाएआ॥
झैगुन आपि सिरजिअनु माएआ मेहु वधाएआ॥ Ibid., p. 1237
- 9 एकं सदिवप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः । Rig Veda, X. 164-6.
- 10 या देवेष्वधिदेव एक आसीत् । Ibid., X. 121.8
- 11 B.B. Chaubey, *Treatment of Nature in the Rigveda*, pp. 61-62.
- 12 य एतं देवमेकवत वेद ।
न दिवतीयो न तृतीयश्चतुर्थो नाप्युच्यते । य एतं.
न पंचमो न षष्ठः सप्तमो नाप्युच्यते । य एतं.
नाष्टमो न नवमो दशमो नाप्युच्यते । य एतं.

स सर्वस्मै वि पश्यति यच्च प्राणति यच्च न । य एतं ।

तमिदं निगतं सहः स एष एक एकवृदेक एव । य एतं ।

सर्वे अस्मिन्देवा एकवतो भवन्ति । य एतं ।

Atharva Veda XIII. 4.15-21

13 सर्वे वेदा यत्पदमामनन्ति तपांसि सर्वाणि च यद्वदन्ति ।

यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीम्यमित्येतत् ॥

Kathopaniṣad, 1.2.15

14 एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं परम् ।

एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत् ।

एतदालम्बनं श्रेष्ठमेतदालम्बनं परम् ।

एतदालम्बनं ज्ञात्वा ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ।

Ibid., 1.2.16-17

15 परमेवाक्षरं प्रतिपद्यते स यो ह वै तदच्छायमशरीरमलोहितं शुभमक्षरं वेदयते यस्तु सोम्य । स सर्वज्ञः सर्वो भवति । तदेषः श्लोकः—

विज्ञानात्मा सह देवैश्च सर्वे प्राणभूतानि संप्रतिष्ठन्ति यत्र/तदक्षरं वेदयते यस्तु सोम्य स सर्वज्ञः

सर्वमेवाविवेश ॥ इति ॥

Praśnopaniṣad, IV. 10-11

16 तस्मै स होवाच एतद् वै सत्यकाम परं चापरं च ब्रह्म यदोङ्कार

तस्मादिवद्वानेतेनैवायतमेनैकतरमन्वेति ॥

Ibid., 5-2

17 एतद्व ब्रह्म वै परं चापरं च ब्रह्म परं सत्यमक्षरं पुरुषाख्यमपरं

च प्राणाख्यं प्रथमजं यत्तदोङ्कार एवोङ्कारात्मकमोङ्कारप्रतीकत्वात् ।

Sankara on Praśnopaniṣad, IV. 5-2

18 ओमित्येदक्षरमिदं सर्वं तस्योपव्याख्यानं भूतं भवद्भविष्यदिति सर्वमोकार एव ।

यच्चान्यत्क्रियालातीतं तदप्योङ्कार एव ।

Māṇḍukyopaniṣad

19 सोऽयमात्माध्यक्षरयोङ्कारोऽधिमात्रं पादा मात्र माश्च पादा अकार उकारो मकार इति ।

Ibid., 8

20 जागरितस्थानो वैश्वानरकारः प्रथमा मात्राप्तेरादिमत्वाद् वाप्नोति ह वैः सर्वान् कामानादिष्व भवति त एवं वेद ।

Ibid., 9

21 स्वप्नस्थानस्तैजस उकारो दिवतीया मात्रोत्कर्षादुभयत्वाद्वोत्कर्षति ह वै ज्ञानसन्तति—समानश्च भवति नास्या ब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति य एवं वेद ।

Ibid., 10

22 सुषुप्तस्थानः प्राज्ञो मकारस्तृतीया मात्रामितेरपीतेर्वा मिनोति ह वा इदं सर्वमपीति 2 च भवति य एवं वेद ।

Ibid., 11

23 हन्तास्य यमस्य वेदस्य रसमाददा इति स भूर इत्येव ऋग्वेदस्य रसमादत्त

सेयं प्रथिकभवत् । तस्य यो रसः प्राणेदत् सोऽग्निरभवत् रसस्य रसः ।

भुव इत्येव यजुर्वेदस्य रसमादत्त । तदिदमंतरिक्षमभवत् ।

तस्य यो रसः प्राणेदत् स वायुरभवत् रसस्य रसः ।

स्वर् इत्येव सामवेदस्य रसमादत्त । सा सौ द्यौरभवत् तस्य यो रसः प्राणेदत् स आदित्योऽभवत् रसस्य रसः ।

अथैकस्यैवाक्षरस्य रसं नाशक्नोद् आदातुम् । ओम् इत्येतस्यैव ।

सेयं वागभवत् । ओमेव नामैषा तस्या उप प्राण एव रसः ।

J.U.B.I. 1.1. 2-5

- 24 हन्तेमं त्रयं वेदं पीलयानीति स इमं त्रयं वेदमपीलयत् ।
तस्य पीलमन्नेकमेवाक्षरं नाश्नोत् पीलयितुम् ओमिति यदेतत् ।
इममु वै त्रयं वेदं मरीमृशित्वा तस्मिन् एतदेवाक्षरमपीलितम् ।
अविन्दन ओम् इति यदेतत् । *Ibid.*, 1.2.1.3
- 25 ओमिति वै साम ।...ओमिति मनः ।...ओमिति इन्द्रः ।
वाग् इति सर्वं देवाः । *Ibid.*, 1..2.2.2
- 26 स त्रयीं बिद्यामप्यपीलयत् । तस्या अभिपीलितायै रसः प्राणेदत् ।
ता एता व्याहृतयोऽभबन् । भूर्भुवः सुवरिति । स एत व्याहृतिरप्यपीलयत् ।
तासामभिपीलितानां रसः प्राणेदत् । तदेतदक्षरमभवद् सोमिति यदेतत् । *Ibid.*, 1.7.1.7-8
- 27 एतदध वा अक्षरं त्रयीं विद्यायै प्रतिष्ठा । ओमिति वै होता प्रतिष्ठितः ।
ओमित्यध्वर्युः ओमत्युद्गाता । एवदध वा अक्षरं वेदनां त्रिविष्टपम् ।
एतस्मिन् वा अक्षरे ऋत्विजो यजमानमाधाय स्वर्गे लोके समुद्वहन्ति ।
तस्मोदोमित्येवानुमन्त्रयेत् । *Ibid.*, III. 4.5. 6-7
- 28 तदेतत् सत्यमक्षरं यदोम इति । तस्मिन्नापः प्रतिष्ठता । अप्सु पृथिवी ।
पृथिव्यामिमे लोकाः यथा सूच्या पलाशानि सत्पृष्णानि स्युः एवमेते नाक्षरेणेमे लोकाः संतृष्णाः । *Ibid.*, 1,2,3. 2-3
- 29 तदध पृथुवैन्यो दिव्यान् ब्रात्यान् पपृच्छु-
स्थूणा दिवस्तम्बनीं सूर्यमाहुरन्तरिक्षे सूर्यः पृथिवी प्रतिष्ठः ।
अप्सु भूमिः शिशियरे भूरिभाराः किस्विन्महीरधितिष्ठन्त्यापः । इति ।
ते ह प्रत्यूचुः
स्थूणामेव दिवस्तम्बनीं सूर्यमाहुरन्तरिक्षे सूर्यः पृथिवी प्रतिष्ठः ।
अप्सु भूमिः शिशियरे भूरिभाराः सत्यं महीरधितिष्ठन्त्यापः इति ।
ओमित्येतदेवाक्षरं सत्यम् । तदेतदापोऽधितिष्ठन्ति । *Ibid.*, 1 2.3 2-3
- 30 तदधतैदेक ओमिति गायन्ति । तत्तया न गायेत । ईश्वरो हैनतदेतेन रसेनान्तधातौः । *Ibid.*, 1.7.2.3.
- 31 अथ ह इवैवं भवत ओमिति । ओ इत्यु है के गायन्ति ।
तद ह तन्न गीतम् । नो एव तथा गायेत् । ॐ इत्येव गायेत् । तदेनदेतेन रसेन संदधाति । *Ibid.*, 1.7.2.4.
- 32 परं हि ब्रह्म शब्दाद्युबलक्षणानर्हं सर्वं धर्मं विशेषवर्धितमतो न शक्यमतीन्द्रिमगोचरत्वात्केवलेन
मनसावगाहितुम् ।
ओंकारे तु विष्णुवादि प्रतिमास्थानीये भक्त्यावेशितब्रह्मभावे ध्यायिनां तत्प्रसीदति इत्येतदवगम्यते
शास्त्रप्रामाण्यात् । Sankara on *Praśnopaniṣad*
- 33 सन्ध्येकमात्रमभिध्यायीत स तेनैव संवेदितस्तूर्णमेव जगत्यामभिसम्पद्यते ।
तमृचो मनुष्यलोकमुपनयन्ते स तत्र तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया संपन्नो महिमानमनुभवति ।
Praśnopaniṣad, 5-3
- 34 अथ यदि दिवमात्रेण मनसि सम्पद्यते सोऽन्तरिक्षं यजुर्भिरुन्नीयते सीमलोकम् ।
स सोमलोके विभूतिमनुभूय पुनरावर्तते । *Ibid.*, 5-4
- 35 यः पुनरेतं त्रिमाणत्रोमित्येनैवाक्षरेण परं पुरुषमभिध्यायीत स तेजसि सूर्यसंपन्नः ।

यथा पादोदरस्त्वचा विनिर्मुच्यत एवं ह वै स पाप्मना विनिर्मुक्तः स सामभिरुन्नीयते ब्रह्मालोकं स एतस्माज्जीव
नात्परात्पर पुरिशयं पुरुषमीक्षते । *Ibid.*, 5-5

36 तिस्रो मात्राः मृत्युमत्यः प्रयुक्ता अन्योन्यसक्ता अनविप्रयुक्ताः ।
क्रियासु बाह्याभ्यन्तरमध्यमासु सम्यक् प्रयुक्तासु न कम्पते ज्ञः ॥ *Ibid.*, 5-6

37 ऋग्भिरेतं यजुर्भिरन्तरिक्षं सामभिर्यतवृवो वयो वेदयन्ते ।
तमोङ्कारैवायतनेनान्धेवि विद्वान् यच्छान्तमजरममृतमभयं परं च ॥ इति ॥ *Ibid.*, 5-7

38 अग्निर्होता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चित्रश्रवस्तमः । *Rig Veda*, I. 1-5

39 यः सुन्वते पचते दुध आ चिदवाजं ददर्षि स किलासि सत्यः । *Ibid.*, II. 12-15

40 इन्द्र मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुश्चो दिव्यः स सुपणौ गुरुत्मान् ।
एकं सदिवप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ॥ *Ibid.*, I. 164-66

41 मानो हिंसीज्जनिता यः पृथिव्या यो व दिवं सत्यधर्मा जजान ।
यश्चापश्चन्द्रा बृहतीर्जजान कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥ *Ibid.*, x. 121-9

42 सूर्यचन्द्रमसौ धाता यथापूर्वमकल्पयत् ।
दिवं च पृथिवीं चान्तरिक्षमथो स्वः ॥ *Ibid.*, x. 121-9

43 ब्रह्मणस्पतिरेता सं कर्मार इवाधमत् । *Ibid.*, x. 72-2

44 ब्रह्मण भूमिविहिता ब्रह्म दयोरुत्तरा हिता ।
ब्रह्ममेदमूर्ध्वं तिर्यक्चान्तरिक्षं व्यचो हितम् । *Atharva Veda*, x. 2-25

45 एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा एकं रूपं बहुधा यः करोति । *Kathopaniṣad*, II. 2-12

46 पुरुषः पुरुषादः । पुरिशयः पूरयतेर्वा । पूरयत्यन्तरिक्षमित्यन्त पुरुषमभिप्रेत्य ।
अयं पुरुषः सर्वासु पूर्ष, पुरिशय *Nirukta*, 2.3; *Brhadārṇyakopaniṣad*. II. 5-18
परात्परं पुरिशयं पुरुषमीक्षते *Praśnopaniṣad*, 5-5

47 सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः सहस्त्राक्ष सहस्रपात् ।
स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वात्यतिष्ठदशाङ्गुलम् । *Rig Veda*, x. 90-1

48 पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं मदभूतं यच्च भाव्यम् ।
उतामतत्त्वस्यज्ञानो यदन्ने नातिरोहति ॥ *Ibid.*, x. 90-2

49 एतावानस्य महिमातो ज्यायांश्छ पुरुषः
पादोऽस्य विश्वा भूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि *Ibid.*, x.3

50 अथातो विभूतयोऽस्य पुरुषस्य । *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, II 1-7

51 वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।
तमेव विदित्वातिमत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥ *Rig Veda*, XXXI. 18

52 यस्मात्परं नापरमस्ति किञ्चिदयस्मान्नाणीयो न ज्यायोस्ति कश्चित् ।
वृक्ष इव स्तब्धो दिवि तिष्ठत्येकस्तेनैदं पूर्णं पुरुषेर्णं सर्वम् ॥ *Śvetāśvatopaniṣad*, III. 9

53 महान् प्रभुर्बुधैः पुरुषः प्रवर्तकः ।
सुनिर्मलामिमो प्राप्तिमीशानो ज्योतिरव्ययः *Ibid.*, III.12

54 अंगुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा सदा जनानं हृदये संनिविष्टः ।
हृदा मनीषाः मनसाभिवलृप्तो य एतदिवदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥ *Ibid.*, III. 13

55 अपाणिपादो जवनो ग्रहीता पश्यत्यक्षुः स श्रुणोत्यकर्णः ।

- स वेत्ति वेदयं न च तस्यास्ति वेत्ता तमाहुर् यं पुरुषं महान्तम् ।। *Ibid.*, III. 19
- 56 य आत्मदा बलदा यस्य विश्व उपासते प्रशिषं यस्य देवाः ।
यस्य छायामृतं यस्य मृत्युः कस्यै देवाय हविषा विधेम ।। *Rig Veda*, X. 121.2
- 57 स एव मृत्युः सोऽमृतं सो भवं स रक्षः *Atharva Veda.*, XIII. 42.5
- 58 भयादस्याग्निस्तपति भयात्तपति सूर्यः ।
भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च मृत्युर्धावति पंचमः ।।
भीषास्माद्वातः पर्वते भीषोदेति सूर्यः ।
भीषास्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च मृत्युर्धावति पंचमः ।। *Taittiriyaopaniṣad*, II. 81
- 59 स विश्वकृद् विश्वविदात्मयोनिः ज्ञः कालाकालो गुणी सर्वविद् यः । *Śvetāsvataraopaniṣad*, VI.16
- 60 आकामो धीरः अमृतः स्वयंभू रसेन तृप्तो न कुतश्चनोनः ।
तमेव विद्वान् न विभाय मृत्योरात्मानं धीरमजरं युवानम् ।। *Atharva Veda.*, X. 8-44
- 61 न तस्य कश्चित्पतिरस्ति लोके न चेतिता नैव च तस्य लिंगम् ।
स कारणं करणाधिपाधिपो न चास्य कश्चिज्जनिता न चाधिपः ।। *Śvetāsvataraopaniṣad*, VI. 9
- 62 स पर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमग्रणमस्नाविरं शुद्धमपापविद्धम् ।
कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयंभूयाथातथ्यमथोऽर्थान् व्यदधाच्छाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ।। *Īsopaniṣad*, 8
- 63 तत् यानि नामानि प्राधान्यस्तुतीनां देवतानां तद्दैवतम् इत्याचक्षते ।
सा एषा देवतोपपरीक्षा । यत्कामः ऋषिर्यस्यां देवतायाम् आर्थपत्यम् इच्छन् स्तुतिं प्रयुङ्क्ते तद्दैवतः स
मन्त्रो भवति ।। *Nirukta*, VII. 1
- 64 ਗੁਰਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਖੋਈ॥ ਜਹ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਹ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ॥ *Gurū Granth* p. 357
- 65 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ॥
ਮਰਤਾ ਜਾਤਾ ਨਦਰਿ ਨ ਆਇਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 152
- 66 ਕਰਿ ਅਪਰਾਧ ਸਰਣਿ ਹਮ ਆਇਆ॥
ਗੁਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਭੋਟੇ ਪੁਰਬਿ ਕਮਾਇਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 904
- 67 गुरु गोविन्द दोऊ खड़े काके लागू पाय । बलिहारी गुरु आपने गोविन्द दियो बताय ।
- 68 गुह सूआ जेह पंथ देखावा ।
बिनु गुरु जगत को निरगुण पावा ।। *Jāyasi Granīhāvali*, p. 301
- 69 अग्निमीडे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् । होतारं रत्नधातमम् *Rig Veda*, 1.1.1
- 70 यस्य देवे परा भक्तिः यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ।।
गुरु ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णु गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुदेवः परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ।।

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MONOTHEISM IN *MŪL MANTRA* AND THE *BIBLE*

M.P. Christanand Pillai

The word 'Monotheism', taking its origin from the Semitic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, came to be charged with a philosophical signification, which one hesitates to use as a measuring rod to evaluate other religions.

Etymologically coined from the two Greek words 'monos' and 'theos', it simply means 'the belief in one God'. But the historical struggle it took in the Fertile Crescent to keep up this belief in one God in an environment, where a variety of beings were worshipped as gods, and the philosophers' analysis of this term in the context of this struggle and the theologians defence of the term to save its religious significance from being corrupted or adulterated by the philosophers' explanation, has made it a religio-philosophic term, with a particular, well-defined meaning. In this meaning it is used for a belief in One Personal Creator God, who is both in and outside the universe.

That means four things : (i) that God is one; (ii) that God is personal; (iii) that God is a Creator, namely He is a different reality from the world which He has created; and (iv) that God is both within and beyond the universe, i.e. both immanent and transcendent. Thus defined, Monotheism is opposed to Polytheism, Pantheism, Henotheism and Deism on the positive side and Atheism, Agnosticism and Naturalism on the negative side.

This paper will first trace the historical development of this concept in Judaism and then show how Christianity, building its monotheism on the same foundation, goes much further in revealing the inscrutable inner nature of its monotheistic God, as possessing not a single but triple personalities.

In the light of this Judeo-Christian concept of monotheism, Sikhism, born of a different culture, will be studied and will be shown to resemble Judaic monotheism, leaving at the same time the door open to the Christian concept of a Triune God and not shut as in the case of Islam.

Judaic Monotheism:

In Hebrew tradition the origin of the belief in one God is connected with the religious awakening of the patriarch Abraham near B.C. 1700. Tradition preserved in the *Book of Joshua*¹, admits that Abraham's ancestors were polytheists. Abraham's call to give up polytheism, however, marked a sharp cleavage with the past.² This is important from the point of view of the history of religions. Judaism begins with the common faith of the tribes³ in the God of Yahweh. Other people have other gods but Israel (the Jews) knows that it is bound to worship Yahweh alone (monolatry), whom it considers, the greatest and the mightiest of gods.⁴

It was only through the work and teaching of Moses that a kind of practical monotheism took shape or rather we should call this, *mono-Yahwehism*, since side by side, there also existed till the Babylonian Exile, near about B.C. 500, various pagan beliefs and practices among many of the ordinary Israelites. But the old Testament always regarded these as aberrations. The acceptance of the pure monotheistic belief by all people, no doubt, was a slow process. Many statements in the historical and prophetic books of the Bible prove this amply. Therefore, we should distinguish three stages in the history of monotheism of the Hebrew people: (a) The period before Moses; (b) the period during and after Moses; and (c) the period of the prophets.

Before Moses The patriarchs venerated God under various names, particularly those of *EL* and *Elohim*⁵ and perhaps also Yahweh. *EL* is often qualified by some other word, *El-Olam* (=the everlasting God)⁶, *El-Roi* (=the God who sees),⁷ *El-Elyon* (=the most high God),⁸ *El-Shaddai* (=the almighty God)⁹ and finally 'the God of Abraham'¹⁰, 'The God of Issac'¹¹ and the 'Mighty one of Jacob'¹². Because of so many names several scholars have concluded that the patriarchs venerated many family local gods. But there is no justification for this conclusion. These names are

not distinct personal names but merely different titles of one and the same God.

Moses and after: Moses, who is of Prime importance in the history of Judaism brings out still more clearly its unique monotheism, though it would surely be a mistake, to consider him the originator of monotheism in Israel. According to the Old Testament, it is the God of the Patriarchs, of Abraham, of Issac and of Jacob¹³ who reveals Himself to Moses as Yahweh, the really living and truly acting God.¹⁴ By redeeming the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, He won them for Himself as His own special possession and He made a covenant with them by which they became His people, who were henceforth to rally round Him as His own. The principal conditions of the covenant to which the Israelites pledged themselves at Mount Sinai are summed up in the Ten Commandments, of which the first is : "I am the Lord, thy God... Thou shall not have any strange gods before me."¹⁵

Certain signs of departure from true monotheism are assigned by tradition to the Mosaic period itself, such as the worship of the Golden Calf.¹⁶ After the settlement in Canaan, the Israelites borrowed from the Canaanites a good part of their religious and cultic institutions. Thus, there arose a syncretistic religion among the people.

The Prophets : Against this decadence the Prophets directed sharp rebukes. Elia endeavoured to force the issue between Baal and Yahweh in his effort to convince the people that Yahweh alone is God. Amos preached that Yahweh, is the righteous Lord. Osee puts more stress on the love of Yahweh for His people, who should therefore love and serve Him alone. The worship of other gods he calls adultery against Yahweh is the Holy one, the only one, who is God and spirit, the only one who is exalted over all, far above everything that is evil and sinful. Jeremiah and Ezechiel combat idolatry even more vigorously, till in Deutero-Isaiah the absolute nothingness of the so-called gods of the pagans is clearly proclaimed.

The motive behind this choice of only one God for worship was Holiness. As long as Yahweh was looked upon as their national God, it

was a question of the supremacy of the strongest, between Him and the national gods of other peoples. But when God was presented, primarily, in His ethical character and worshipped as God of Holiness, there was no longer any measure of comparison. If Yahweh was the Holy God then other gods were not holy. Here was an entirely new element : Yahmeh as the moral governor of men and nations, which was absolutely unique; the god of other nations were "elilim" (=nothings), "vanity", "lies". From now on the pure monotheism became the sure possession of the Jewish people. This has been Judaism's great contribution to the religious thought of mankind and still constitutes the burden of Messianic ideal, the coming of the day, when all over the world "God shall be one and His name One."

For the Jews, God is, above all, the One God. "Hear (Sheme) O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Deut., 6.4) or in the spirit of Jewish tradition: "the Lord our God is unique Lord". That is Israel's primordial act of faith, its supreme prayer, its chief act of witness.

This unity of God which is the basis of Israel's existence and message is neither an abstract unity, not a mere negation of plurality. In fact, what is fundamental in Jewish monotheism is not the proclamation of a message but the concrete, historical manifestation of the One God, the concrete historical relation between the One God and His people.

The Characteristics of Yahweh : Thus, while the Old Testament never speculates about God's essence, it often speaks of what He is and does for Israel, for mankind, and for the world. The various names given to God show that God is, above all, looked upon as a *person*, to be compared to human persons. But He is more than a mighty and immortal man, such as the gods of the pagans.¹⁷ In fact, great emphasis is laid on the contrast between God and man. Yahweh is God and not man.¹⁸ The difference between God and man is no less than that which exists between spirit and flesh.¹⁹ This supposes that the concepts of God and spirit were regarded as equivalent. God's essence is known from the fact that He is powerful, living and, above all, holy²⁰. And His power is seen in creation, in the Government of the universe and all that lives.

God is often called the Living God to distinguish Him from all the other gods, who are 'lifeless.'²¹ He is the unfailing life.²² He is the source of life.²³ But the holiness of God is His special characteristic. He is the Holy One,²⁴ the one whom man cannot look²⁵ at without running the danger of being struck dead.²⁶ This holiness of God is given a moral character, especially by the prophets. Since Yahweh is God and not man and since He is the Holy One, His holiness is shown in His Justice²⁷, it is outraged by Israel's lack of trusting faith²⁸ and stands in such opposition to sin that the sinner who comes in contact with God is destroyed.²⁹ The Bible is full of the expression; the "Holy One". And the Holy One demands a holy people, and this is not merely in ritual way³⁰ but also in a moral way.³¹

Christian Monotheism:

In the New Testament, monotheism is several times expressly formulated in the words of the Old Testament.³² For example, in Mark's Gospel, Jesus replied "This is the first; Listen Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart".³³ Again, in the same Gospel we find that "He is one, there is no other".³⁴ In the Acts, Paul exhorts the pagans of Lystra to turn from their vain idols to the living God.³⁵ For him, the so called gods of the pagans are really no gods at all.³⁶ St. Paul says in the First Corinthians, "We know that an idol has no real existence and that there is no God but One; for ever if there are what are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many such gods and many such lords, yet for us there is only one God"³⁷. Hence, the belief in one God is basic to Christian faith. In this a Christian must be strict follower of his Jewish tradition.

In general the same Jewish concept of God is found in the New Testament. Many of the Old Testament expressions, such as the "God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob,"³⁸ the "God of Israel" and "Our God" are used in the New Testament. The God whom the *Bible* reveals is a Personal God, Self-existent and Self-conscious, the creator of the Universe and the Fountain of Life and Blessedness.

It is true that the *Bible* never discusses God apart from His attributes, in as much as God is what He reveals Himself to be. It is possible,

however, to conceive of God in relation to our own being in the way either of similarity or of contrast, even if his essence must remain in comprehensible. According to Christ, God is a spirit :

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth - John 2.24

He is a pure spirit, in the sense that He is not complex or made up of parts, and He is without body or bodily presence, and therefore not visible to bodily senses.

“No one has ever seen God” - John 1.18

It is clear also from the Scripture that this Invisible spirit is a personal spirit, rational, self-conscious, and self determining and intelligent moral agent. The scripture calls Him, the *Living God*. “As the Lord Lives”, occurs in many oaths. He is the Master of life and death. His name ‘Yahweh’ implies an essential dynamism and life : He is active and tireless. He is the Holy God; “I am God and not man; the Holy one present among you”, He declares.³⁹ God is often termed the *Father*. The Old Testament applied the term ‘Father’ to God cautiously and never in the sense of God being ‘Father’ to all men. God was represented as father of David’s line⁴⁰ or father of orphans⁴¹ but such fatherhood never attained the universal extension given to it in New Testament, which set aside the notion of a national God, who was father of Israel only and applied it to all men. Not only are all who are led by the spirit of God, sons of God, but also all may speak to Him without ceremony, as a child in the bosom of a family addressing his father by the familiar “Abba”.⁴² Jesus repeatedly reminded his hearers that God was their Father, forgiving, eager to listen, full of mercy and grace, tender and loving.⁴³

Finally God’s love is seen in a new light by the New Testament authors. In the Old Testament love was never clearly universal in scope. But in the New Testament God’s goodness, kindness and love toward Israel and all mankind is clearly revealed. St. John writes, “God is Love”⁴⁴ and “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that those who believe in Him may not perish, But may have life everlasting”.⁴⁵

This is fundamental to Christianity. God is love. Now, love

manifests personality; a person loved and a person loving. Hence, Christianity is an eminently personal religion and its God a very personal God.

Three personalist mysteries summarise Christianity :

- (i) God, the absolute, and infinite, unique and wholly "other", is not a person but *three* person.
- (ii) The '*Word*' of God is a person, Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and man, having both divine and human natures.
- (iii) The '*Spirit*', which unites God, the Father, and His Word, is also a person. This Spirit, entering into the world creates a mystical personality of Christ, through which a Christian enters into a personal communion with God.

All Christian theology is ultimately a reflection on and seeking an understanding of these personal realities. Old Testament's monotheism deeply-rooted in the Jewish mind, is the basis on which the mystery of Trinity is built and at the same time is its main doctrinal obstacle. Yahweh's divinity needs no proof. Paul, a Jew, reared in the purest Jewish tradition,⁴⁶ reserves the title '*O theos*' exclusively to God, the Father.⁴⁷

Jesus Christ, though rarely called 'God' in the New Testament, is endowed with strictly divine attributes and titles, which were strictly divine in the Old Testament.⁴⁸ He forgives sin⁴⁹ on his own authority, perfects and completes the law,⁵⁰ is the supreme Master of the Sabbath⁵¹ and supreme Judge of all men,⁵² and knows his father as intimately as His Father knows Him.⁵³ Christ is called directly God by Paul in one passage.⁵⁴ Therefore, no student of the *Bible* can doubt the divine personality of Christ. Christ is a Divine person.

As for the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, it is at the Last Supper that Jesus discloses it in John's gospel.⁵⁵

The spirit of God became known to the Apostles through the gifts of grace which He poured out on them on the Pentecost day.⁵⁶ Although the Holy Spirit is never expressly called God, He is recognised as divine. This can clearly be seen in the letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians,⁵⁷

where it is said of Him that He penetrates into all things even the deepest secrets of God, just as only the spirit of the individual man knows his own thoughts.

Thus *Bible* clearly speaks of three distinct persons in One God. The oldest Trinitarian passages are in the Epistles of Paul, where he closely joins the 'Lord' and the 'Spirit' with God, and thereby implies that 'the God' and 'the Lord' and 'the Spirit' form a certain unit.⁵⁸ The formula which Paul uses consistently (God, Lord, Spirit) and his absolutely monotheistic teaching show clearly that his concept of divine Trinity has nothing to do with the divine Triads of pagan religions in which a father God, a mother goddess and a son god form the traditional family of gods (Osiris, Isis and Horus in Egypt, for example).

Thus the New Testament reveals the deepest mystery of the one God-head as consisting in three divine persons. If God is one but also three, it follows necessarily that the sense in which He is one differs from the sense in which He is three. Otherwise there will be contradiction in God. As already indicated, Scripture does not give us a fully formulated doctrine of the Trinity, but it contains all the elements out of which theology has constructed the doctrine. The teaching of Christ bears abundant testimony to the true personality of each of the persons within the Godhead and also sheds light upon the relations existing between the three persons. The necessity to formulate the doctrine was thrust upon the Church by forces from without and it was, in particular, its faith in the divinity of Christ, and the necessity to defend it that first compelled the Church, to face the duty of formulating a full doctrine of Trinity for its rule of faith. The formulation of "One God exists in three Persons" was not fully assimilated Christian life and its profession of faith prior to the end of the fourth century A.D. The formulation does not solve the mystery. The mystery remains because this is not a truth discovered by reason. It is a revealed truth and reason cannot fully explain it.

To sum up, the God of the Christians is an eternal,⁵⁹ invisible⁶⁰ Spirit.⁶¹ He, being immaterial, is bound neither to time nor place.⁶² He is Omniscient, Omnipotent, Creator, Just and Merciful. His providence extends to all men and nations. He is transcendent but He is also immanent

in them because He gives them their existence and sustains them in their activities. He is the God of the moral order, rewards the just and punishes the wicked. Sin being separation from God, the man who sins wilfully runs the risk of being separated from God. Moreover, as He is a Holy God, nothing defiled can enter His presence. Finally this one God is a personal God, concretely expressed, He exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Since God is defined as Love and Word, the doctrine of three persons helps to understand better something of the Life and Love of God in Himself.

In the history of religions the concept of monotheism was certainly there, even outside Judeo-Christian culture. And here again one discovers it first in concrete instances. Zoroastrianism and Islam, for example, were practical monotheistic religions first, opposing all that was contrary to the worship of the one only God. Now Sikhism was not an exception to this rule. It also originated as a practical monothestic religion, before it was expressed theoretically as such.

The *mūl maṇṭra* that epitomizes the formula of the Sikh creed, enunciates that God is the only God whose name is Truth, and who is the Creator, without fear and without hate; the Eternal, whose spirit pervades the universe; the Ungenerated *purakh(u)*, Self-existent, to whose worship the grace of the 'Guru' leads.

God is described here as One, *Ek Oamkār*. There is but One God. Innumerable passage in the *Gurū Granth* amply prove this. But what does 'unity' mean? Does it mean a unity in the sense of monism, that is, the unification of all realities, (whether finite or infinite; whether created or uncreated), into the One Reality called God? Or does it mean the One underlying principle or source from which all multiplicities arise as the Greek philosophers thought? Or does it mean the one only God as opposed to all evil in the world as Zoroaster's God came to represent? Or does it mean the Unique One, the Transcendental One?

The God of Guru Nanak cannot be the God of Advaitists, because for Guru Nanak and his Sikhs, the world is not illusion, 'maya'. It is real:

“Real are Thy realms and real Thy Universe. Real are Thy worlds and real the created forms.”⁶³

Professor Harbans Singh in his book, *Guru Nanak and Origins of Sikh Faith* points out : “One of the conspicuous marks of Guru Nanak’s teaching was its spirit of affirmation. It took the world as real and embraced man’s life in its various aspects.”⁶⁴ The God of the *Gurū Granth* is a litany of hymns addressed to some one living and personal. The One, Guru Nanak speaks of is a transcendental one. But the transcendence is not in the sense of Deism, whose deity has no connection whatsoever with the world. For Guru Nanak He is also immanent, that is, not in the sense of pantheism but in a monotheistic sense. He is transcendent, since He is above the world as the highest being and as the ultimate cause, unique in every sense of the word. He is also immanent, since He is *present in* the world. The ‘*present in*’ is certainly not the same as ‘*identical with*’ the world. In the *Gurū Granth* transcendence of God is greatly emphasized:

Not by thought alone;
Can He be known
Though one think
A hundred thousand times;
Not in a solemn silence
Nor in deep meditation
Though fasting yields and abundance of virtue
It cannot appease the hunger for truth
No by none of these,
Nor by a hundred thousand other devices,
Can God be reached.⁶⁵

The hymn extolling His transcendence are comparably more in number than those which stress His immanence.

Transcendence should be conceived not as something, up above or beyond space; it is rather an essentially absolute independence, self-sufficient. In like manner, immanence is not a mixing of Divine Being with created realities, but a mode of spiritual presence, absolutely

irreducible to that of corporeal presence and by that very fact, infinitely more intimate, enveloping and capable of inhering in everything.

Guru Nanak says :

The One is Revealed

The One is Hidden

The One is behind the Dark Veil.⁶⁶

This states that God is so transcendent that revelation is needed to know Him '*The one is revealed*'. He is so immanent that He cannot be seen. '*The One is Hidden*', yet since He is the Ground of all, He is said to be the One behind the veil : '*The One is behind the Dark Veil*'.

With regard to the attributes of God which are common to most of the monotheistic systems such as infinity, simplicity, immutability, eternity, goodness, omniscience and omnipotence, the *Gurū Granth* is abundantly profuse in expressions, What is important to our paper is the overwhelming emphasis in Sikhism on its personal God. We could go as far back as the *Rig Veda*, to say that the concept of a personal God. But it goes to the credit of only Sikhism to turn this belief into an essential element of religion.

The word *purakh(u)* may not mean 'a person' in the modern sense, nor could we translate it as *puruṣa* of the Indian philosophy, since Guru Nanak himself, as if to deny the *puruṣa* concept of Hinduism to *purakh(u)*, has placed the word *qudrat* in opposition to *purakh(u)* instead of the usual counterpart, '*prakṛti*' of the Indian philosophy. Dr. Sher Singh in his *Philosophy of Sikhism* affirming that the God of Sikhism is a personal God, quotes Macauliffe to support this statement : "A religion without a personal God has not yet been found to be a living and enduring force."⁶⁷ Further, he points out that "the essence of personality lies in responsiveness to other persons. How can a lifeless and impersonal God behave like a sympathetic father or mother. God is not only *sat(i)* but also *purakh(u)*." "Nanak's God", writes Khushwant Singh, in his book, *Hymns of Guru Nanak*, "despite His incomprehensibility, is good, warm and friendly God. He is the father (*pitā*), lover (*prītam*) and master-husband (*khasam-sāhib*)."⁶⁸ Therefore the God of Sikhism is a personal God, otherwise the

pitā, prītam and *khasam-sāhib* will have no meaning:

The One God is the Father of all;
We are His children.⁶⁹

Furthermore, Guru Nanak speaks of surrender, love, devotion and worship to God. How is this possible, if He is not a person ? The words Guru Nanak uses after *purakh(u)*, namely *nirbhau* and *nirvair(u)* are words which could not be said of an impersonal absolute. Love and hatred, fear and fearlessness are the attributes of a personal living being. Again Guru Nanak's concept of Creator-God is different from the Hindu concept. He is *karatā purakh(u)*. For Guru Nanak, God alone is eternal; He alone is self-existent. All others were created by Him:

By Him are all forms created.⁷⁰

God is the sole cause, the cause of causes, there is no other cause outside Him and hence He is named '*karan-kāran*'. Nanak says that God is the Creator of heaven and earth. Even the highest gods of Hinduism : Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are all created by Him, Guru Nanak denies any kind of material cause by bringing in '*hukam*' in the concept of creation, consistently and rightly. The creation takes place through His will:

His will it is that creates the forms...⁷¹

How speak of Him who with one Word did the whole Universe create.⁷²

What He wills He ordains.⁷³

Although '*hukam*' or '*sabad*' of God is mentioned in the Koranic or Biblical sense, yet some scholars, such as Dr. Sher Singh think that Guru Nanak's idea of creation is monistic. This is misleading. A correct understanding of the Guru's concept of creation, gives a better clue to the understanding of his concept, than Hindu philosophy. The term 'creation' expresses the way in which the world and everything pertaining to the world have their origin, ground and final goal in God. It implies a comprehensive action of God on the world and a total relationship of the world to God. The concept transcends all categories of thought, and the

metaphysical systems like pantheism, emanationism and dualism cannot be reconciled with the doctrine of creation, because on the positive side, it is the action of a personal God and the 'person' is the most characteristic of His creations, and on the negative side it is one of casuality. The concept of authorship paves the way for a better understanding of creation.

Creation embraces the whole of reality of the world; not just its beginning but its whole existence including its consummation; and not just its static being, but is dynamism and activity. We must, therefore, insist that creation is not a 'cause' within the category of causes, but the living transcendent ground of the world and its movement. Creation means that everything without exception is God's action and God's beneficent action towards man. The belief in creation is to see some one behind all things, to see the world as 'gift'.

The goal of creation can only be man. as person and as community. How true this is when the sociological implication of *langar* is considered. Only man can receive love as love. Creation is considered as the free act of God to man. It means that the whole of reality comes to him as a *sabad* (word) of God, summoning and inviting him to an equally total response, in which man responds to the *sabad* with the fullness of his own being and of his world :

*Nirāṅkār ākār(u) hoi ekaṁkār(u) apār(u) sadāiā.
Ekaṁkarah(u) sabad dhun(i) oām̐kār(i) akār(u) baṇāiā.*⁷⁴

The Guru uses words like *kartār*, *siraṇḍā*, *usāranahār*, *khāliq*, and *karanhār* which are all personal names, as if to mean that creation is the action of a personal God.

Christianity and Sikhism:

Looked at in the light of Judeo-Christian monotheism, Sikhism may be called a monotheistic religion, only when its unique transcendental and immanent God is also conceived as person, separate from the created universe. That the God of the *Gurū Granth* is a personal God, we can boldly say, is the unanimous affirmation of the majority of Sikh theologians and philosophers. But we cannot say the same as regards the reality of God being separate from the reality of the world. There are

interpreters of the *Gurū Granth*, who interpret the scriptures in a monistic sense. If this is the case, then Sikhism cannot be called 'monotheism' in the Judeo-Christian sense, as the distinction between the creatures and the Creator is fundamental to the Judeo-Christian meaning of monotheism.

All the same, Sikhism and Christianity agree in the condemnation of plurality of gods and in the insistence on the worship of the one and only one God. In this Guru Nanak's hymns seem like an echo across the centuries of the monotheistic preaching of Jesus. "We know that there is only one God, the Father, who is the Creator of all things." (I Cor; 8.6) in whom "we live and move and are" (Ac s; 17.1-28), etc.

The Golden Temple, *Harimandir*, at Amritsar reminds one of the only temple of the Jews at Jerusalem dedicated to the one only God. They allowed no other temple to be built anywhere in the world. Only synagogues, places for assembly and study, were allowed. And the only requirement for a synagogue was a chest to contain the sacred scrolls, exactly similar to our *gurdwārās*, where the only equipment one finds is the throne for the *Gurū Granth*.

Comparing the nature of God in Christianity and Sikhism, it appears that the description of God as love and Friend, has its similarities in both religions :

O my love, I have, no one but Thee,

Without Thee, I like nought , and by loving Thee I am at peace.⁷⁵

Come into me, O Friend, that I see Thee, and my body and mind in cool comfort.⁷⁶

are but a few of the quotations from the *Granth* to compare with "Love the Lord, the God", "God is love", "Love is the fulfilment of the Law" etc. of the Bible.

This resemblance as regards God's love is still more striking when one notices that it is a 'pardoning love' in both religions. Both of them affirm that "whatever a man sows, that he will reap" (Gal., 8.7). Beyond this essential part of the theory of retribution *karma*, the two teachers differ, Guru Nanak accepting the theory of rebirth without questioning it:

and Jesus rejecting it implicitly or even perhaps explicitly in rare passages. In my opinion the theory of retribution is prone to incite man to despair. For who shall escape the sway of his own actions ? Who, indeed, unless the very law of retribution can be transcended by the forgiving power of the merciful God ?

That God is merciful, that He is our friend, that He Himself pardons, is the good news preached by Guru Nanak after Jesus. Sins can be washed away, not by ritual baths but by a sincere love for God:

When the True Guru is merciful, man shall know no sorrow.⁷⁷

Off (his impurity) in this place of pilgrimage that is within him.⁷⁸

By attaching himself to God's Name he is saved.⁷⁹

To this similarity, we must add the similarity that exists in both religions as regards '*nām*' and '*sabad*'. For the semitic peoples, an unnamed thing was a non-existent thing. Names were considered to identify and describe the very being and function of their bearers. In religious matters, knowledge of the name of God was considered the most effective way of establishing contact with Him. The divine name was evocative, not only of God's being, but of His relationship with His people. It was held in great esteem. The "name of the Lord" was loved, praised and thanked. The divine name was synonymous with God's glory. (Ps., 42.8). Prophets spoke "in the name of the Lord." Christians still begin and end all their services in the name of God. The 'name' was often personified and eventually was referred to God Himself. (Ps 30.27).

"*Nām japo*" is Guru Nanak's constant exhortation, "As the blind uses a stick, so do I use the name of the Lord to feel the path that leads to God."⁸⁰ *Nām* is considered as the shrine of God and the sanctuary of divine knowledge :

Should I go to bathe at the place of pilgrimage ?

God's name is the real place of pilgrimage.

My pilgrim station are the Name's meditation and the inner divine knowledge.⁸¹

Name is also used for God Himself :

Through the mercy of the true Guru
 Nanak has obtained the true Name⁸²
 Dwell on Him day after day,
 that thou mergest imperceptibly in *nām*⁸³
 We should worship the *nām*, believe in the *nām*
 Which is ever and ever the same and true.⁸⁴

Although in the question of creation, the parallel between Christianity and Sikhism is not clear because of the interpretation given by scholars in the monistic sense, yet the use of the word '*sabad*'⁸⁵ in the creative act, shows that the act of creation in Sikhism could also be explained in the Christian sense. *Sabad*, translated as *logos* is an intriguing term. *Logos* is central to Christianity. *Sabad*, also, I must say, is central to Sikhism. *Logos* signifies Jesus and *sabad* signifies Guru. The word is the Guru.⁸⁶

Sabad in Sikh theology is the intermediary between the Guru and the disciples; it is the essence of knowledge : "*Sabad Brahm giān*." Similarly *logos* in Christian theology is Christ, the only mediator between God and man. He is also the *Brahm giān* "The one who knows me knows the Father." These verbal and conceptual parallels in both religions require deep study before we could affirm or deny their identities or differences.

Now coming to the question of God as a 'person' Judaism, Islam and Christianity affirm God to be a 'Person'. It is here that a dividing line is drawn between the semitic and the Hindu concept of monotheism. It is here, that Sikhism parts ways with Hinduism, and travels with semitic religions. But when the point of plurality of persons in God is reached, Judaism and Islam slam the door on Christianity. Koran emphatically denies any possibility of more than one person in God. Islam identifies 'nature' with 'person'. Therefore One God means one person. Later Judaism, also, is averse to this concept, and that is due to a misunderstanding of the concept of 'nature' and 'person'. Modern psychology reveals new insights into the truth of person and personality, which were unknown before. Human personality is seen as a centre of relationships through self-consciousness and selfgiving. A person is, therefore, someone complete in himself (an incommunicable individual)

but also some one constituted by his relations. Persons, as we know them, are social, that is they, enjoy personal relationship. This is theologically significant for Christians since it makes their Trinitarian mystery somewhat understandable.

Sikhism, with its guru-concept, *nām*-concept, and *sabad* concept, seems to me to hold the key to further insight into the trinitarian mystery of this one only Deity. All these require deep studies, in the absence of which I can only affirm as I have done at beginnings of this paper, that Sikh monotheism is open to an interpretation of Christian monotheism and does not slam its door on it as Islam does.

NOTES

- 1 *The Holy Bible*, Jos., 24, 2
- 2 *Ibid.*, Gen., 12, 1-3; Acts 7.24
- 3 *Ibid.*, Josi., 24.13-25
- 4 *Ibid.*, Exod., 15.11
- 5 *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Bible*, p. 1550
- 6 *The Holy Bible*, Gn. 21 23
- 7 *Ibid.*, 16.13
- 8 *Ibid.*, 14, 18, 22
- 9 *Ibid.*, 17.1
- 10 *Ibid.*, 46.43
- 11 *Ibid.*, 24.12, 27
- 12 *Ibid.*, 49.24
- 13 *Ibid.*, Exod., 3.13, 15
- 14 *Ibid.*, 3.13 ff
- 15 *Ibid.*, 24.3-8, 34, 1-33
- 16 *Ibid.*, 32
- 17 *Ibid.*, I Kings., 18, 21-39
- 18 *Ibid.*, Hos., 11.9
- 19 *Ibid.*, Is., 31.3
- 20 *Ibid.*, 1.4; 5, 19, 6.3
- 21 *Ibid.*, Ier., 10.1.6
- 22 *Ibid.*, Dt., 32.40
- 23 *Ibid.*, Gen., 2.5-7
- 24 *Ibid.*, Is., 40.25, Hos., 11.9

- 25 *Ibid.*, Exod., 13.6; 19.21; Is., 6.1-5
- 26 *Ibid.*, 24.10f
- 27 *Ibid.*, Is., 40.12-17; Ps. 99.3d
- 28 *Ibid.*, Gen., 6.5 Is., 42.24-25
- 29 *Ibid.*, Is., 6. 5; Is, 5.4-6
- 30 *Ibid.*, Lev., 11.44; Exod., 19.4-10
- 31 *Ibid.*, Is., 62.12
- 32 *Ibid.*, Deut., 6.4; 4.35
- 33 *Ibid.*, Mark., 12.29
- 34 *Ibid.*, 12.32
- 35 *Ibid.*, Acts., 14.15
- 36 *Ibid.*, Gal., 4.8
- 37 *Ibid.*, Icor., 8.4-6
- 38 *Ibid.*, Acts., 3.13
- 39 *Ibid.*, Hos., 11.9
- 40 *Ibid.*, Am., 7.14
- 41 *Ibid.*, Ps., 67.6
- 42 *Ibid.*, Rom., 8.14; 16; Gal., 4.4-6
- 43 *Ibid.*, Lk., 15.11-32; Mt., 6.25-27
- 44 *Ibid.*, IJn., 4.9
- 45 *Ibid.*, Jn., 3.16
- 46 *Ibid.*, Phil., 3.5
- 47 *Ibid.*, Rom., 15.3; 13.33; I Cor., 2.11
- 48 *Ibid.*, Hos., 2.16-25
- 49 *Ibid.*, Lk., 5.20
- 50 *Ibid.*, Mt., 5.17
- 51 *Ibid.*, 12.8; Mk., 3.1-7
- 52 *Ibid.*, Mt., 25.31; Rom., 2.16
- 53 *Ibid.*, Mt., 11.27
- 54 *Ibid.*, Rom., 9.5
- 55 *Ibid.*, John., 16.13
- 56 *Ibid.*, Acts., 2.3f; I Cor., 7.40; 14-18
- 57 *Ibid.* I Cor., 2-10f.
- 58 *Ibid.*
- 59 *Ibid.*, Rom., 16.26; I Tim., 1.7
- 60 *Ibid.*, I Tim., 1.17: 6.16; John., 1.18
- 61 *Ibid.*, Jn., 4.24

- 62 In., 4.21-23; Acts., 17.24f
- 63 ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਖੰਡ ਸਚੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ॥
ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਲੋਅ ਸਚੇ ਆਕਾਰ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 468
- 64 Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origin of the Sikh Faith*, p. 204
- 65 ਸੋਚੈ ਸੋਚਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਸੋਚੀ ਲਖਵਾਰ॥
ਚੁਪੈ ਚੁਪ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਲਾਇ ਰਹਾ ਲਿਵਤਾਰ॥
ਭੁਖਿਆ ਭੁਖ ਨ ਉਤਰੀ ਜੇ ਬੰਨਾ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਭਾਰ॥
ਸਹਸ ਸਿਆਣਪਾ ਲਖ ਹੋਹਿ ਤ ਇਕ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਨਾਲਿ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 1
- 66 ਏਕੈ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਏਕੈ ਗੁਪਤਾ ਏਕੈ ਧੰਪੁਕਾਰੇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1215
- 67 Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, p. 191.
- 68 Khushwant Singh, *Hymns of Guru Nanak*, p. 27
- 69 ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 611
- 70 ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਭੇ ਉਪਜਹਿ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 55
- 71 ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1
- 72 ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੇ ਕਵਾਉ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 3
- 73 ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋਈ ਕਰਸੀ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 6
- 74 ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਆਕਾਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਅਪਾਰੁ ਸਦਾਇਆ॥
ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਧੁਨਿ ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ॥ *Vārāṇ Bhai Gurdās*, 26.2
- 75 ਮੇਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਮਾ ਮੈ ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥
ਮੈ ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਭਾਵਈ ਤੂੰ ਭਾਵਹਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 61
- 76 ਆਉ ਸਜਣ ਤੂੰ ਮੁਖਿ ਲਗੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਠੰਡਾ ਹੋਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 1100
- 77 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਤਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੀਐ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 149
- 78 ਸੁਣਿਆ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਭਾਉ॥
ਅੰਤਰਗਤਿ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਮਲਿ ਨਾਉ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 4
- 79 ਕਰਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਆਖਣੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਉ॥
ਜਿਤੁ ਲਗਿ ਤਰਣਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਥਾਉ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 662
- 80 ਜਿਉ ਅੰਧੁਲੈ ਹਥਿ ਟੋਹਣੀ ਹਰਿਨਾਮੁ ਹਮਾਰੈ॥
ਰਾਮਨਾਮੁ ਹਰਿ ਟੇਕ ਹੈ ਨਿਸਿ ਦਉਤ ਸਵਾਰੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 422
- 81 ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਵਣ ਜਾਉ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ॥
ਤੀਰਥੁ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਹੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 687
- 82 ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਤੁਠੈ ਪਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚਾ ਨਾਉ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 71
- 83 ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਸਹਜੇ ਨਾਮਿ ਸਮਾਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 29
- 84 ਨਾਉ ਪ੍ਰਜੀਐ ਨਾਉ ਮੰਨੀਐ ਅਖੰਡੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਚੁ ਸੋਇ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 17
- 85 ਉਤਪਤਿ ਪਰਲਉ ਸਬਦੇ ਹੋਵੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 117
- 86 ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੁ ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 943

***MŪL MAṆṬRA*—AN UNTENABLE KORANIC PARALLEL EXAMINED**

G.S. Talib

In this short paper I have tried to lead the reader to concentrate on the origin of *mūl maṇṭra* and to meet certain false and untenable conjectures, made by people who have jumped from a superficial resemblance between its affirmations and some of those in the *Koran*, to the conclusion that the *mūl maṇṭra* owes its enunciation to the Muslim Scripture. Before coming to examine this particular point, I may refer the reader to Guru Nanak's intimate association with the Indian spiritual and philosophical thought, a number of elements of which he incorporated into the great moral synthesis and the vision which he formulated for the guidance of Indian humanity. He studies the confused and multiple spiritual state of the time which was the cumulative result of a thousand years or more of the proliferation of false and corrupting systems of thought, and firmly and courageously rejected all that he found to lead mankind away from the formulation of a pure, creative way of life for the higher good of the individual and for the community. This was not an easy task, for creeds and sub-creeds by the hundred had developed and taken a hold on the minds of the people, and superstitious, empty rituals, fraudulent substitutes for true religion and crassly ignorant systems claiming to aid spiritual ascent and enlightenment were prevalent.

The ancient spiritual visions of the great seers from whose meditations the great concepts of the Attributeless Absolute (Brahman) the Supreme Creator (*Puruṣa*), Immanent in the universe, and the great moral law of Karma had emerged, had in the intervening centuries of decline and decadence given way to the doctrine of Incarnations and propitiation of the forces of terrible aspect. There had occurred general divorcement of religion from the true path of spiritual and moral action. Sect warred against sect over petty details of ritual and non-essential

articles of belief, and anything like a creed which should unite rather than divide was practically unknown to the scholar-pandits and those reputed to be holy—the Yogis, Siddhas, Naths, Bairagis, Sanyasis and others of such fraternities. There was a situation of acrimonious theological conflict in which no visible centre existed, towards which these various warring creeds might converge to find harmony, synthesis and what may be called a national religion which should unite and guide men in all activities—sacred and secular. The only binding force in the vast world of humanity which may be called Hindudom, was the fact of the Indian origin of those hundreds of creeds which went to make up its corpus, and the presence of a practically irreconcilable force, Islam which had introduced a new assertive creed and had set up an empire whose polity did not hesitate to define the liquidation of Hindudom as its cherished aim. To the blind orthodoxy and visionless practice of the Brahmin, the Yogi, the Tantrist and other classes of priesthood was added the fanaticism of the Mullah, Kazi and Sheikh—all imbued with the zeal to end within India what they regarded as impure, heretical creeds. All this was further complicated by the existence of a highly corrupt and unjust state system, both where Muslim feudal rule prevailed and where the complexion of such rule was Hindu.

Guru Nanak's Vision—A Special Revelation:

Knowing this to be the background to Guru Nanak's holy Ministry and such to be the character of the religion given by him for the guidance of humanity, it should not be difficult to formulate some idea as to what its relationships with the creeds then existing would be. Guru Nanak did not, contrary to the wrong notion made current by scholars without intimate knowledge of his teaching, attempt a 'synthesis' of Hinduism and Islam. Such a notion would not only be repugnant to the very end which he had set before himself of giving to mankind a new vision, but would be contradicted at every step by a careful study of his teaching. His was a special Revelation, a vision, emerging in a creed in which all should share—not only the high-caste and low-caste in Hindudom with its vast sprawling entity, but also Muslims and those of other non-Hindu creeds. This they would do because of the underlying universality of the

vision and the all-embracing humanitarian character of the faith commended. While Guru Nanak did accept such formulations from the various aspects of the religious thought of India as could go into the kind of creed and vision which he set out to give, he did not accept any aspect of it in its totality because of the unacceptable accretions which had got struck to it from its primitive origins and the later ecumenical tendency of Hinduism to add layer upon layer of unreconciled belief and myth in the numerous creeds which formed its corpus. Again, while he entirely rejected Yoga in its various forms as handed down from the past and transmuted its symbols and rituals into those of moral life, he rejected also asceticism, Brahmanical ritualism and the dark creeds coming down from primitive times which formed the real faith of the vast majority of the people. While he found the moral teaching of the *Gītā* valuable, as inhering in its doctrine of disinterested moral action and its commendation of Action as an essential element in the religious life, he accepted neither the Incarnation theory on which the whole fabric of the *Gītā* is built nor the system of Yoga-praxis which forms the major portion of this facious scripture.

***Mūl Mantra*—Its Indian Phraseology:**

The *mūl mantra* to refer briefly to it analytically is formed totally of formulae which echo back to the formulation through its long history of the philosophical thought of India. Through *mūl mantra* and the four sentences following thereafter,¹ the Guru is expressing the vision, in the first place of the Absolute and following on that, of the Creator with Attributes who alone can be the object of man's worship and devotion. *Ek-Oaṁkār*, as written in Gurmukhi is a 'Syllable' (*akṣar*) and stands, as stated in numerous places in the *Gurū Granth* for the Absolute, Brahman without Attributes. As *kartā purakh(u)*, He is *Puruṣa* echoing down from the Veda, and has attributes like *nirbhau* (without fear), *nirvair(u)* (without rancour), *gur prasād(i)* (realized through the grace of a Spiritual Guide). This last, as said earlier, is a special characteristic of the attitude of Bhakti. In the four sentences quoted above, the vision is of Divine Eternity and Immutability and of the ultimate assertion of the Moral Law in the universe.

Here two important considerations may not be lost sight of. In the first place, it is significant that all the elements in *mūl maṇṭra* are of Indian origin : Even *mehar*, *nadar(i)* which figure so ubiquitously in *gurbāṇī* is here *prasād(i)*. Secondly, the dual vision of the Supreme Being, as Absolute (*Ek-Oamkār*) and as Creator *karatā purakh(u)* has deep, millenia-long associations with Indian thought and vision. It is not of the *Koran*, wherein Allah is conceived, of course, as One without a rival sharing in His might. But that vision is different in character from the more intimate one which emerges from the *mūl maṇṭra*. It may here be mentioned in passing that terms belonging to spiritual philosophy have their roots in the cultures within which they have grown, and continue through time to recall the related aspects of their respective cultures. *Oamkār* (with its basic *Om*) connotes the Absolute Brahman inaccessible, unknowable while Allah is the One without a rival, transcending the deities of pre- Islamic Semitic faiths. One cannot be a substitute or synonym for the other. To look for Guru Nanak's monotheism (it is however, not mere monotheism but monism) Islamic creed would be misleading.

Guru Nanak and Islam:

Of Islam, Guru Nanak has not imbibed any doctrinal element. The idea of the special and final prophethood of Muhammad, the Revelation through Gabriel, the conception of Paradise as a delightful, sense ingratiating garden, with all the juicy details, the idea of Muhammed as intercessor of all non-Muslims as *Kāfirs* to be eternally damned, etc.—all are alien to Guru Nanak's vision, as may be obvious even on casual thinking. All that Guru Nanak took was certain Muslim Sufistic terms, which he found expressing not the separatist orthodoxy of institutionalized Islam, but the ideas of humanitarianism, grace and devotion. These harmonized with what he himself had been preaching. Finding them also included in the teachings of the Sufis, he adopted certain terms expressive of these, alongwith other terms derived from Muslim sources which were pretty familiar to the common people. Rituals like the Muslim prayer (*namaz*), the (*remazan*) fast, circumcision etc., he only transmuted into spiritual experiences, as had been done by him in the case of Yogic and Brahminical ritual. This is the extent to which he made use of the Muslim

tradition, which in *gurbāṇī* is only peripheral, and is intended to emphasize tolerance. Muslim attributes of God like *rahīm*, *karīm*, *subhān* are used by him. A few terms, derived not from orthodox Islam, but again from Sufistic thought are given great importance in view, of their expressing what he himself loved to emphasize. These are *razā* (divine will), *hukam* (divine ordinance) and *mehar*, *nadar* (grace).²

***Ajūnī* and the *Koran*—an Examination:**

We may now particularly consider *ajūnī* (unborn) which forms part of *mūl mantra* and by some is thought to be inspired by the *Koranic* *Iam yalid wa Iam-yulad*, begets not, nor is begotten (*Koran*, 112.3). This of course, does look closely to resemble Guru Nanak's affirmation in *ajūnī*. But there is a fundamental difference which unless clearly grasped, we may easily be with those Ahmadi zealots and others of their like who do not hesitate to claim Guru Nanak to be a Muslim and invent a whole host of specious 'proofs' to support their assertion.

While in *mūl mantra* only *ajūnī* (Uncreated, Unborn) is the term used, in the *Koran* there is 'begets not, nor is begotten'. Begets not in the *Koran* refers to the Christian belief in God having progeny, which it seeks to contradict. The assertion has this particular reference, for which support is provided by the text in *Sura-i-Maryam* (Chapter on Mary, Mother of Jesus) where, in two separate places, horror at such a belief is expressed. Sayeth Allah : That God begot a son—what ye have said, its horror is such as may burst the heavens, shatter the earth into particles and shake the mountains to make them collapse. *Āyat* 88 of this *Sura* says : 'They (misbelievers) say, God begot a son'.³ Again it is said 'It is not becoming God's greatness to say He begot a son'.⁴

This being the origin and reference to 'begets not' in the *Koranic* assertion, Guru Nanak warns against the belief in the Incarnation of the Supreme Being as avatar. The worship only of the supreme (*akāl-purakh(u)*; *Ek-Oamkār* Brahman) is enjoined upon the believer in *gurbāṇī* and not of any of the deities or avatars, who are looked upon not only as being enmeshed in the 'three attributes' of Maya, but as themselves servants of God and mortal. Clear references to this, pointing to the implication of *ajūnī* may, for example, be found in Guru Arjan

and Guru Gobind Singh in more than one place. Guru Arjan says :

The Lord is touched neither by birth nor death.⁵

Thou ignorant misbeliever, He neither is born nor dies.⁶

May the tongue be accursed which utters, the Lord taketh birth.⁷

Referring to Rama who is worshipped as the Supreme Being, it is said in the *śabads* of Guru Gobind Singh : ‘Should you assert that Rama is unborn (*ajūnī*), unvanquished, why then was he born of the womb of Kaushalya?’⁸

About Krishna, the other great avatar, in a similar context, it is said :

He who hath no father or mother; caste, nor child or grand-child
and is the redeemer—

What necessity made Him come into the World to be called the
son of Devaki?⁹

In another place the claim for Krishna to be Supreme Being is repudiated, since it would be unbecoming the Supreme Being who is above all rancour, to drive Arjuna’s chariot in battle.

The two sources from which the assertion has come, in *gurbāṇī* and the *Koran* being diverse in history and the very formulation in language and emphasis being different, it would be wrong to trace Guru Nanak’s *ajūnī* to the *Koranic* āyat in *Sūra-i-Ikhlās*. As said earlier, in reference to the respective overtones of *Ek-oamkār* and Allah, the two visions are diverse in their origins and implications. Guru Nanak is repudiating the Indian mythology, while the *Koran* is contradicting the Christian belief in the sonhood of Jesus, as no doubt also the idolatry of the pre-Islamic Arabs. Guru Nanak’s vision is drawn from his uncompromising faith in the Absolute who is one, Indivisible, Eternal and above Transmigration (*ajūnī*). In view of this, it is only appropriate that the *Koran* be not brought in to find supposed origins for Guru Nanak’s vision in this or other contexts.

A Parallel Discussed—Sheikh Farid and Guru Nanak:

Further, to demonstrate the divergent background and approaches

from which similarly sounding spiritual formulations emerge, a study may be made of two hymns, one from Sheikh Farid and the other from Guru Nanak—both in *Rāga Sūhī*. Sheikh Farid's hymn, 'Thou didst not look to the tackle of the boat while it was yet time',¹⁰ obviously evoked from Guru Nanak the corrective : 'Make the boat of prayer and austerities, so that the passage be smooth.'¹¹ In both hymns the imagery is similar. But there is a vital difference in the attitude towards death in each case. To Sheikh Farid death is eternal, as in Muslim belief. Life, like milk in the breast, is gone for ever; lovers never again shall meet. To Guru Nanak, through the Master's grace, with the capital of good qualities, union will inevitably occur again. Transmigration will be annulled. Here the Guru's belief in the unending process of life shows itself as against Sheikh Farid's Muslim belief in death, after which only on Judgement Day will the spirits rise to face their Maker. It will help clearer understanding and better discrimination not to forget that Guru Nanak's reference to Islam are only in those universal aspects of spiritual life which the Sufis enunciated, and not in the *Koranic* doctrines.

Further Parallels Examined:

This is not to deny that Guru Nanak did, as said earlier, for including tolerance and also to keep his vocabulary at the familiar level, adopt in the original or in rendering some attributes and terms. These were known to Islam, but also to Indian faiths. Fear of God is again and again asserted as necessary for the spiritual life by Guru Nanak. This has some parallels in the *Koran*. Muhammad is called *Munzir* (frightener) in this context. Yet there the implication is different from anything similar in the Guru's teaching. In Islamic teaching, fear of hell and the terrible retribution on unbelievers finds a reiteration which is foreign to Guru Nanak's teaching of loving devotion and search for union with the Creator. The penalty for life devoid of devotion is *vijog* (separation from the Creator). *Rahim* (merciful) is *Koranic* and is used by Guru Nanak as one of God's attributes. *Ghafur* (pardoner) is not employed in *gurbāṇī*, but its idea is expressed. *Ghani* (above want) finds a place. God in the *Koran* is 'First and Last' (*Huwal Awwal wal-Akbar*). In *gurbāṇī* He is. Here again the resemblance in the visions is only apparent. The content of the Guru's

pronouncement is different, implying eternity and the moral basis of the cosmos. In Guru Arjan a similarity but with marked difference is there :

I bow to holy Lord Eternal—the primal, the ever-present and Eternal Formless One.¹²

The holy Gurus did not have to get their visions from the *Koran* or any other scripture. These came to them from their own God-consciousness which of course had for its cultural background the Indian thought which they had inherited and imbibed.

Contacts with the *Koran* there no doubt are, but these, as said earlier, were peripheral only. *Koranic* traditional thought and belief, have had no influence on the Guru. In the *Koran* it is asserted, as in the *Bible*, that God created the universe in six days (*fi sitta ayyam*). This is entirely different from the cosmology adopted by the Guru. The *Koranic* Revelation to Muhammad is said to be made through Gabriel, who came "as near him as two bows' length or even less". Not to believe this would be hereby according to Muslim belief. So also not to believe in the entire pre-Islamic Judaic religious thought. Yet the Gurus cannot be credited with any such belief. As a matter of fact, while they respected Islam and its founder, and bore an attitude of tolerance and compassion towards the Muslims, as towards all other people, they did not subscribe to any of the doctrines or dogmas of Islam. To pick and choose a phrase here and a phrase there to show the *Koranic* influence on the Gurus is a futile and mistaken exercise, and highly misleading. In Guru Gobind Singh's *Akāl Ustat(i)* however, there is a conscious attempt at acclimatizing and adopting some portion of Muslim phraseology. If any parallels with Islamic phraseology are to be looked for, these should be traced there.

NOTES

1 ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥

ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

Gurū Granth, p. 1

2 *Mihar* is Persian while *nadar* (*nazar*) is Arabic.

3 *Wa qalu attakhaz-al-Rahman waladan.*

The Holy Quran, Maryam, 88

4 *Wa ma yanbaghi lir-Rahman in yatkhaza waladan.*

Ibid., Maryam, 91

5 ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ॥

Gurū Granth, p. 1136

- 6 ਓਹੁ ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਮਰੈ ਰੇ ਸਾਕਤ ਢੋਰ॥ *Ibid.*
- 7 ਸੇ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ॥ *Ibid.*
- 8 ਜੋ ਕਹੈ ਰਾਮ ਅਜੋਨਿ ਅਜੈ ਅਤਿ ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਕੋਸਲ ਕੁਖ ਜਯੋਚੁ ॥ *Dasam Granth*; p. 713
- 9 ਤਾਤ ਮਾਤ ਨ ਜਾਤ ਜਾਕਰ ਪੁਤ ਪੋਤੁ ਮੁਕੰਦੁ ॥ *Gurū Granth.*, p. 711
- 10 ਕਉਨ ਕਾਜ ਕਹਾਹਿਗੇ ਤੇ ਆਨਿ ਦੇਵਕਿ ਨੰਦ ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 794
- 10 ਬੇੜਾ ਬੰਧਿ ਨ ਸਕਿਓ ਬੰਧਨ ਕੀ ਵੇਲਾ ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 729
- 11 ਜਪ ਤਪ ਕਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਬੜੁਲਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਲੰਘਹਿ ਵਹੇਲਾ ॥
- 12 ਓਅੰ ਸਾਧ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਨਮਸਕਾਰੰ ॥
- ਆਦਿ ਮਧਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੰ ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 250

TĀO AND EK OAMKĀR : A COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO POWERS

Guninder Kaur

Tāo is the ultimate power for many Chinese; *Ek Oamkār* is the ultimate power for the Sikhs. Recognition of the value of power, e.g., in the technological field, has led to significant advancement, but in the humanistic and philosophic arena, full recognition of its enormous possibilities has yet to be made. Here, however, comparativists of religion and some phenomenologists have broken ground. I refer to the works of Mircea Eliade and Kristensen. Nevertheless, I have not come across a comparison between *Tāo* and *Ek Oamkār*. Why? Linguistic and geographical distances could, perhaps, be one answer. Let me hope that a recognition of a similarity between *Tāo* of the Chinese and *Ek Oamkār* of the Sikhs shall lead to some progress. An inexpressible one, the progress I have in mind is along T.S. Eliot's "Intersection of the Timelessness with Time" (Four Quarters) heading towards enhancement and enrichment of the human mind. The attempt here will not be to gloss over the differences between *Tāo* and *Ek Oamkār*. As a matter of fact, it is the apparent contrast, engulfing similarity, that renders the element of concern. I shall now begin my comparison between two powers, its primary basis being Lao Tzu's *Tāo Te Ching*¹ and Guru Nanak's *Jap* (u)². Lao Tzu:

The Way(Tao) is like an empty vassel
That yet may be drawn from
Without ever needing to be filled.
It is bottomless; the very progenitor of all things in the world.

—Chapter 4.

Guru Nanak:

Ek Oamkār Sat(i) nām(u).

—Preamble to the *Jap(u)*

He can neither be established nor created;
The Formless One is limitless, complete in Himself.

—*Paurī 5.*

The above quotes seem to me to represent most closely and clearly, the ultimate power that Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak in their own, and indeed separate ways, seek to underline. *Tāo* is a way, a path, which Lao Tzu compares with an empty vessel. Emptiness, Void is *Tāo*, Quite the contrary, Guru Nanak makes positive assertions. Polar to the notion of void, the preamble to the corpus of Sikh scripture, the *Gurū Granth*, goes thus: “*ek oamkār, sat(i) nām(u)*. *Ek—Eikk* or One; *Oam*—He/Ultimate Power; *Kār*—Is. Thus *ek oamkār sat(i) nām(u)* affirms the existence (via *kār*) and unity (via *Ek* or One) of the ultimate power (via *Om*) Whose name (*nām*) is Truth *sat(i)*. The existence, unity and entity of the power has been claimed. Instead of a void we thus perceive an Isness-*sat(i) nām(u)* While the numeral Zero seems to be pregnant in *Tāo*, the numeral ‘I’ stands at the very beginning of the *Jap(u)*, making firm assertions.

This has been the apparent fundamental difference. However, as we ponder further, *Tāo* and *ek Oamkār* acquire considerable similarity. That *Tāo* is not a mere vacuity but also utmost fullness ought to be noted. “That yet may be drawn from without ever needing to be filled”. Again in chapter 5 : “In that it is empty but gives a supply that never fails”. The lines, though ambiguous, highlight the fact that from the emptiness of the *Tāo* gushes forth a non-ending “that” (What does Lao Tzu mean?) and/or non-failing supply (of what? we do not know). *Tāo*, therefore, cannot be complete void. Rather, it is a complete void, but simultaneously, a complete fullness. Chapter XI sheds more light on this enigmatic nature of *Tāo*:

We put thirty spokes together and call it a wheel;
But it is in the space where there is nothing
that the usefulness of the wheel depends.

The nothing—the invisible space surrounded by thirty spokes—is the care of usefulness; power of rotation emanates from its inside. Does this invisible nothingness “progenitor of all” not correspond with Guru Nanak’s Formless and Complete One? What Lao Tzu calls “emptiness”

or “void” or “nothingness”, is claimed by Guru Nanak to be everything. The terms remain in opposition; the power, the value of *Ek* and *Tāo* remains equally intense.

Also explicit in the quotes above is the extremely paradoxical approach used by Guru Nanak and Lao Tzu. Holmes Welch, calling *Tāo Te Ching*, a “famous puzzle”, states that a paradox can express a complex truth more succinctly than a logical exposition. He gives the example of Picasso: “...rather than painting two profiles with one eye (Picasso) paints one with two.”³ Fritjof Capra in *The Tāo of Physics* seems to be echoing Professor Welch. Says Capra, “*Tāo Te Ching* in an extremely puzzling, seemingly illogical style. It is full of intriguing contradictions...”⁴ No wonder the *Tāo* is complete emptiness and complete fullness as well. Guru Nanak, fully certain of the existence of the *Ek*, is even able to give Him the name of *sat(i)*. Yet, Guru Nanak refers to Him as the Formless One. Via paradox, Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak render the *Tāo* and *Ek Oamkār* infinitesimal. Therefore, in order to comprehend the two powers, our minds will have to give up the usual path of logical reasoning.

I would now like to explore the *Tāo* and *Ek oamkār* on the ground of two major intriguing contradictions:

- (i) Transcendent-Immanent.
- (ii) Primal Unity-Creator, Preserver, Destroyer.

On the one hand, *Tāo* and *Ek oamkār* are beyond comprehension. They are Absolute, Complete, Unconditioned, devoid of colour and form and all attributes. This aspect of the two powers reminds me on Kant’s noumenal world which is unknown, unlimited, beyond space and time and beyond all human perceptions.

Lao Tzu, chapter I :

The Way that can be told of is not an unvarying way.

The names that can be named are not unvarying names.

It was from the Nameless that Heaven and Earth sprang.

In Chapter 25 :

There was something formless yet complete

That existed before heaven and earth
 Without sound, without substance
 Dependent on nothing, unchanging, all pervading, unfailing
 One may think of it as the mother of all things under heaven
 Its true name we do not know
 Way is the by-name that we give it.

In Chapter 32:

Tāo is eternal but has no fame (name).

In Chapter 65:

The mysterious 'Power'. so deep, penetrating.
 so far-reaching...

Hence *Tāo*, the power that is being explored, is beyond our reach.

It is impalpable; incommensurable (Chapter 21). Actually it is even wrong to call it the "*Tāo* that can be told of is not an unvarying *Tāo*". "The nameless one" (chapter 40) is only given the "by-name" of *Tāo*. In chapter 22 it has been referred to as the "Primal Unity". And as we saw in chapter 4, it is "Bottomless". Thus without boundaries, infinitely deep the Nameless is Primal Unity : Soundless, Substanceless, Independent, Intrinsic and Darker than any mystery : Transcendent, can we perceive *Tāo* in any way?

Guru Nanak's *nirguṇa* (transcendent) is also an Absolute Unknown:

Jap(u). Stanza 3 :

Countless have tried to describe Him
 But He still stands beyond all descriptions.⁵

Stanza 24 :

Endless His vision, and Endless His inspiration,
 Endless His Creation and endless the ends thereof,
 Endless men's search in anguish for His limits,
 but His limits cannot be found.

Endless He is, and none can know His end.⁶

Preamble :

Akāl mūrat(i) (Timeless One or the Eternal One)

Once again, the fathomless, infinite Power is beyond our reach or

comprehension. It is amazing to see how close Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak have been. A brief summary :

Lao Tzu	Guru Nanak
i) Primal Unity Corresponds with	I, only ONE
ii) Bottomless	Endless
iii) Formless, yet complete	Formless One is Infinite He is Complete
iv) Nameless	I or <i>Sat(i)</i> which itself is unnameable
v) <i>Tāo</i> is eternal	<i>Akāl Mūrat(i)</i> (Timeless)
vi) It was from the Nameless that Heaven and Earth Sprang	Endless His Creation and Endless the Ends...

Are we then to conclude that *Tāo/Ek Oamkār* is a limitless transcendent, impossible ideal Not quite.

Says Lao Tzu:

The Valley Spirit never Dies. It is Named the
Mysterious Female...
It is there within us all the while...

(Chapter 6)

Says Guru Nanak :

“O Nanak, Know the True One as Immanent in all.”⁷

“Within us all” : “Immanent in all”. How very similar. Both Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak have said that the force is within us. It is “hidden” says Lao Tzu in chapter 41. In *Rāga Rāmkalī*. Guru Nanak asks, “The drop of water in the sea, and the sea in the drop of water, who shall solve this riddle? Who knoweth the secret?”⁸ The example of the deer is also used by Guru Amar Das to confirm that the *Ek* is within us hidden. “Just as the deer possesses the musk within itself but not knowing runs far and wide in search of it, so does man”.⁹ Neither Lao-Tzu nor Guru Nanak doubt the existence of *Tāo* and *Ek*. Both maintain its certainty within the individual . *Tāo* and *Ek Oamkār*, therefore, become enchanting enigmas

which men can know, at least hope to know. For Lao Tzu the power can be applied to the self, household, village, kingdom and eventually to the empire. In all cases it leads to a flourishing. Lao Tzu's view of transcendence and immanence of the power is epitomized in :

If one looks for *Tāo* there is nothing solid to see
 If one listens for *Tāo* there is nothing loud enough to hear.
 Yet, if one uses it, is inexhaustible.

The *Tāo* has no physical characteristics. It is transcendent through and through, yet immanent also, because it is present within us all and its power can be *used* or *applied* by the entire society.

In Guru Nanak, however, the transcendent Absolute *nirguṇa* does take on form and manifests Himself, viz, become *saguṇa*. Upanishadic origin as McLeod says,¹⁰ the terms were first introduced by the Fifth Guru, Guru Arjan. And, the thrust of Guru Nanak's teachings as well as of the following gurus lay upon in. Nonetheless, His achieving form should not be misinterpreted as being installed in an idol for in *paurī*⁵ of the *Jap(u)* Guru Nanak emphatically denies such a possibility:

He cannot be installed like an idol
 Nor can man shape His likeness.¹¹

The *saguṇa* aspect is a reflection of divine immanence present in His creation.

He is the Absolute, yea, He the Related One.
 Who by His Power, hath to be wretched all.¹²

are my favourite Nanakian lines. They depict the Transcendent acquiring form and alluring man. While the *Tāo* cannot be seen (even though earth and heaven have sprung from it), the *Ek Oamkār* can be Vast and magnificent Nature is indeed a minute part of the Infinite. Lao Tzu offers only an application and usage of the Power, Guru Nanak's a unique portrait:

Thou hast a thousand eyes but without eyes Thou art,
 Thou hast a thousand feet but without feet Thou art,
 Thou hast a thousand nostrils but without nostrils Thou art,

This act of Thine has fascinated me.¹³

Via the thousand the Guru tries to describe Him in the utmost level of comprehension (as does Lao Tzu the creation of the *Tāo*, not *Tāo* itself) yet, with the juxtaposition of the “without”, His immensity which expands beyond all expression and thought is accepted. Lao Tzu makes no trials in describing the *Tāo*; Guru Nank does. That both Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak accept the transcendence as well as the immanence to *Tāo* and *Ek Oamkār* respectively, in their own ways, cannot be denied.

Paradox 2 : Unity-Trinity

In the Primal Unity-*Tāo*/*Ek/Om̐kār* flow many pluralities. *Tāo* and *Ek* are not only Creators (as mentioned earlier), but also preservers. Destroyers also? I yet have a question about it. Nonetheless, these pluralities should not be considered contradictory to the core of the One Nameless *Tāo* or the *Ek Oamkār*. Guru Nanak’s saying makes this clear ‘Unity becomes plurality and plurality ultimately becomes Unity’. Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* too says that “totality is plurality regarded as unity” (while talking about the noumenal world). Since Primal Unity has been discussed in the earlier part of the essay I shall begin with the triple aspects.

Tāo Creator has been denoted by Lao Tzu through images of Mother and Female Valley. Just as the mother gives birth to her child, in the same manner, the world emanated from the womb-like, Empty *Tāo*. “Female Valley”. Very ambiguous, could mean fertile soil giving birth to a luscious world. Sex imagery is thus implicit in Lao Tzu. I, therefore, do not agree with Professor Welch when he, in parting of the way, emphatically states that Lao’s *Tāo* “offers no sexual imagery”. Continuing on—

Chapter 42 :

Tāo gave birth to the One; the One gave birth successfully to two things, three things, up to ten thousand...

Chapter 51:

Tāo gave them birth, The Power of *Tāo* reared them, shaped them

according to their kinds, perfected them, giving to each its strength.

In chapter 34, Lao Tzu says that the ten thousand creatures owe their existence to the *Tāo*. All of them have been produced by it. Having produced them, "it covers the ten thousand thing like a garment".

Thus the *Tāo* performs a dual role. On the one hand, it creates the ten thousand; on the other, it rears them, perfects them, "covers them like clothes". Through the simile of the clothes, *Tāo* is signified as sheltering and protecting its creation but laying no claims upon it. We very well know the usefulness of a winter coat on Boston streets in the middle of January. Yet, how easy it is to throw it off.

Now to Guru Nanak. The Singular force, *Ek Oamkār*, is, 'paradoxically creator-preserver, just as *Tāo* in for Lao Tzu. But Guru Nanak goes a step further than Lao Tzu and perceives the "destroying" power culminated in the *Ek* also. This might mislead one to believe that Guru Nanak is aiming to accept the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu Shiva. Yes, he accepts it, but, simultaneously, also rejects it. The three in the Hindu faith exist as specifically different gods. In the Nanakian conception of the Ultimate, their individual powers of Creation, preservation and destruction culminate into the One, leading to an absolute nullification of the three God.

As Creator of *karatā*, the Power brought forth the world into existence:

Through His will He creates all the forms of things

But what the form of His will is

None can define", says Guru Nanak in the *Jap(u)*.¹⁴

Guru Nanak maintains that nobody knows the hour of creation. Lao Tzu does not mention any time either. For Guru Nanak there was undivided darkness for countless aeons. There was neither earth nor heavens. This description of the beginning of cosmology contains a loud echo from the *Tāo Te Ching* which, as we saw, depicted emergence of the earth and the heaven from the womb-like, empty *Tāo*. Non division and darkness are implicit in Lao Tzu. But the Guru emphasizes the pervasiveness of divine will. Difference : Lao Tzu does not. Guru Nanak

details at length the things which did not exist, focussing on the point that there was nothing but *Ek Oamkār* and His *hukam* (Will).

And when it pleased Thee, Thou didst create the world, establishing Thy creation without visible supports.¹⁵

‘From His one word all creation sprang, flowing out like a multitude of rivers. None can know the limits of His creation’.¹⁶ Lao Tzu speaks of the ‘Ten Thousand’ things, coming out in sequence : *Tāo* produced the One, the One two, two to four to ten thousand. But there is no such sequence in Guru Nanak’s understanding. Everything just spurted out. Even Hinduism and Islam talk of fourteen regions-seven upper and seven nether. Unlike the fourteen (Hinduism and Islam) and the ten thousand things (Lao Tzu), Guru Nanak does not limit the creation. No numerical figure can estimate the *Ek*’s vast creation. While there is no wonder or amazement in *Tāo Te Ching*, Gurus are deeply moved. “How can an insignificant creature like myself express the greatness and splendour of Thy creation¹⁷ ?” Exclaims the Guru “*Wāhegurū*” (meaning, Thou art Wonderful).

The *Ek* does not merely create. Having brought the world into being, He sustains it. He who made the night and day, the breezes and waters, sees to it that they do continue to run or blow or flow. This lies paralleled to the force of *Tāo*, which rears, perfects and shapes the ten thousand things. Being the Ultimate watch keeper and caretaker, the power in Sikhism acquires a theistic level. This is absent in Lao Tzu. The power which preserves in Lao Tzu is but like clothes...and not one upon which depends the world like a child upon his mother (as in Guru Nanak). For Lao Tzu the *Tāo*, like mother, gives birth but does not remain authoritative or claiming in any way. The term “perfect” is present in both Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak even calls the *Ek*, *swāraṇhār* (Decorator) for magnificent nature is the symbol of his artistic vision.

The Ultimate Creator and Sustainer is also the Destroyer. He who created also destroys; apart from Him there is no other.¹⁸ Having destroyed he builds and having built He destroys.¹⁹ The *Ek Oamkār* is now the *Saddaṇhār*, who calls back His creation. In this Shiva-like aspect, the

Ek is seen as the Supreme Judge :

Peerless is His law and peerless His court,
 Peerless His scales of justice and peerless their measure,
 Peerless is His generosity, peerless His acceptance,
 Peerless His mercy and peerless His commands,
 How peerless? How priceless? who can describe Him?²⁰

with the Ultimate Power, as Supreme Judge, are intertwined two important concepts of Sikh faith : Karma and *nadar(i)*. Vedanta too stresses Karma but, according to Guru Nanak, karma is only the cause of birth in this world, the state of final beauty, however, depends upon His *Nadar(i)* (benevolence). In stanza 4 of the *Jap(u)*:

Our birth is the fruit of our actions ;
 But salvation comes from His Grace.²¹

The "Peerless Judge" judges our actions and recreates man according to his past deed. Thus while Karma determines or enslaves man and has pessimism attached with it, *nadar(i)* (Grace), an embodiment of optimism, liberates him.

Nowhere in Lao Tzu does one directly come across terms karma or *nadar(i)*. But I do see them lying hidden in *Tāo Te Ching*.

Chapter 30 :

"Rebound". It is indeed very much like Guru Nanak's "as you sow, so shall you reap." Of course, the Ultimate power is not there to check that past deeds, yet one's actions in Lao Tzu do get bounded back, upon which lies the Nanakian thrust also. Similarly, Grace can be discovered in the application of *Tāo*. While *Tāo* has to be applied, Grace is the Ultimate's showering of benevolence upon the individual. The two are in direct contrast. This is a misinterpretation because the showering of Grace does not imply a pessimistic attitude in the individual. In order to accept the benevolence one had to attune himself/herself to a certain frame of mind. This activity seems to me to lie analogous with the application of *Tāo*. Once *Tāo* is applied or Grace received (both after strenuous effort), the result in both instances is, flourishing.

Before the discussion on the “unity and trinity” comes to a close , I must say that some destructive power is inherent in *Tāo* also. I did not mention the destructive aspect earlier. That was because Lao Tzu had said that the *Tāo* lays no claim upon its creation and, as has been repeated many a time before, it is like the clothes covering the ten thousand things, But twice I ran into a powerful line which has metamorphozed my conclusion. The line goes thus:

(i) In chapter 30 :

And what is against *Tāo* will soon perish.

(ii) Chapter 55 :

And whatever is against *Tāo* is soon destroyed.

Throwing off the coat on a Boston street in the middle of January surely is easy. But will one not freeze to death and/or catch pneumonia? Even though “covering the ten thousand like clothes” The *Tāo* is the possessor of a destrutcive element. In brief, both *Tāo* and *Ek Oamkār*, being primal unities, contain, within themselves, the three powers of creation, preservation and destruction.

So far, the focus of my exploration has been upon deciphering the two powers. That these Powers have very strong ethical implications must be noted. *Tāo*, the Way, has to be adopted by men. And *Ek* is not a far off unity, but one to be grasped by men. Both *Tāo* and *Ek Oamkār* are goals which human kind must identify itselfs with, an identification which I would now like to study along a dual axis:—

(i) The way to the Way of *Ek*

(ii) Ultimate Achievement.

The Way told by Lao Tzu to reach the Way is again very paradoxical, Chapter 22 highlights it:

To remain whole, be twisted.,“

To remain straight, let yourself be bent,

To become full, be hollow.

Explicit in the above quote is the object to remain whole, straight and full. This can be obtained only by being the opposite.

Among a multitude of images I found three main strands upon which rests Lao Tzu's thrust of the way to the Way. They are

- (i) Inactive action
- (ii) Simplicity
- (iii) Non-attachment to knowledge

Guru Nanak sets up three paths to reach the *Ek*, namely:

- (i) Action
- (ii) Knowledge
- (iii) Love

Moreover, in the *Jap(u)*, Guru Nanak sets up five spiritual stages. In Lao Tzu no spiritual realm is mentioned : the way to be followed is not yonder but here. Thus, superficially, many a contrast is seen :

Inactive action vs Action

Against knowledge vs knowledge

Existence vs spiritual stages.

But penetrating further, Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak seem to have set up a rather similar path.

Inactive Action:

Inactive action has been symbolized by Lao Tzu in Water and Valley and Female. Water according to Him, comes closest to the *Tao* because, unresisting itself, water can cut the most resistant materials. Lao Tzu also mentions the power of the female who, without action or via quiescence, i.e. going under the male, causes him to act and thus conquers him. So the theme to Lao Tzu's inactive action is action; action devoid to desire, action devoid of aggressiveness, however, not an abandonment of action.

Action was very important for Guru Nanak and in no way did he consider an abandonment of action. He too stressed action without desire and without aggression. The image he used was that of lotus. Common to both the *Gītā* and the *Gurū Granth*, the simile of the lotus manifests man calmly acting, yet being untouched by action. The only difference is

that Guru Nanak's calm, inactive doer remains on water, so does the absorbed one in the *ek*.

I saw no such absorption in *Tāo Te Ching*.

Simplicity:

Simplicity in Lao Tzu is basically returning to our original nature. Symbols offered by him are the uncarved block (wood in its pristine glory); raw silk (su-silk, before being coloured or dyed) and child 'ying'erh-all cartilage; hardly any bone, therefore, soft and bending and innocent). 'Simplicity' has been stressed by Guru Nanak also. As a matter of fact, the Sikh faith represented a protest against the artificialities that the Hindus and Muslims of his period were immersed in. There is a passage in the *Rāga Vadhāns* which I cannot resist quoting :

I plaited my tresses,
With vermillion daubed the parting of my hair
And went to Him
But with me He would not lie
My heart is grief laden, I could die.²²

The passage, though ambiguous, is fascinating. Through the metaphor of the maiden wanting to sleep with her lover, the Guru seems to express his desire to enter into a perfect union with the *Ek*. Like the maiden plaiting her tresses and daubing her parting with vermillion, he could be following the artificial route of idolworship, throwing waters to the gods and goddesses wearing sacred threads, practising penance...

Simplicity thus has been stressed by both Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak. But have you noticed the different aromas?

For Lao Tzu, it is a going back to the original, simple self. It is a cyclic path. For Guru Nanak it is simply an absorption of love for the *Ek-Oamkār* without external worshipping. It is a simple attitude towards something/someone else is linear as opposed to being cyclic or going back to the same personal self.

Knowledge:

Lao Tzu condemns all learning particularly the pseudoscience of

the values taught by the moralists and realists. "Those who know do not speak; those who speak, do not know"(56).

One cannot accumulate knowledge by looking out of windows or travelling after.

Chapter 47 :

Without leaving His door He knows everything under heaven,
Without looking out of his window. He knows all the ways of
heaven.

For, the further one travels the less one knows. Therefore, the sage
arrives without going, Sees all without looking,

Does nothing, yet achieves everything.

Admit Gurus:

I have searched all the Shastras and Vedas but *Nām* is nowhere to
be found.²³

Knowledge is considered important by Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak but knowledge of a unique kind. It can perhaps be understood by reflecting upon an opposition, viz, the Advaita tradition. *Gyāna* (or Knowledge) enunciated in the Advaita tradition has from Shankara to Radhakrishnan been saturated with a metaphysical quest. The emphasis is throughout on logical expertise and rationalistic play. Such is not the implication of Knowledge for either Lao Tzu or Guru Nanak. True knowledge they maintain is not received from books or other external attempts. It is something from within. While the Sage gains all the knowledge of ways of heavens by staying indoors; Guru Nanak's *Gurmukh*, recognizes the Divine spark of the *Ek* within himself. "The Ways of heaven" on one side; the "divine spark" on the other who can describe the difference between the two? who can describe the silence between two waves of the sea?

Having recognized that Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak put forth a similar approach towards *Tāo* and *Ek*, we can, henceforward, launch into unfolding the Ultimate achievement—"flourishment"—as I termed it. Lao Tzu has a social and political achievement in mind.

Apply it to yourself and by its power you will be freed from Dross.

Apply it to your household and your household shall thereby have abundance,

Apply it to the village and the village will be made secure.

Apply it to the kingdom and the kingdom shall there by made to flourish.

Apply it to an empire, and the empire shall thereby be extended.

-Chapter 54.

Though the alpha point in the progress is the individual himself/herself, the omega point is the empire. Not so for Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak's achievement begins with the individual; it ends with the individual also. Personalistic through and through, Guru Nanak asks for a penetration within the self. But when the individual phenomenon of recognition extends to the 'selves' rather than a singular 'self', does it not lead to an achievement of the society as a whole? Indirectly, the junction of the omega points in Lao Tzu and Guru Nanak is the same.

Ultimately, a significant question needs to be answered. How is it acquiring the *Tāo* and /or *Ek Oamkār*?

In chapters four and fifty-six, Lao Tzu epitomizes serenity and tranquillity as the consequence of *Tāo* :

All sharpness blunted

All tangles untied

All glare tempered

All dust smoothed

This is called the mysterious levelling.

In acute disengaged form confusion-dim, clear and equanimous is the obtainer of *Tāo*. Quite the contrary, the Guru is ecstatic Exclaims he:

O my Mother, I am in ecstasy, for I have found the True *Ek*

Yes is a flash, I sound my Lord and my mind is filled with the song of bliss

Like every jewelled angel and the fairies of every region, all joined

in chorus to sing the song of the word (*nām*).

All who have Him enshrined in their minds, sing;

Sayeth Nanak:

I am truly in ecstasy for I have realized my Guru.²⁴

In the former feelings were blunt : in the latter, the feelings have been evoked to their utmost level. Yes, confusions seem to have disentangled in both 'Freedom entered'. But is so much of luminosity and radiance in the Guru's version. "Jewelled angel". Somehow, the brilliance indicates that "all dust (has been) smoothed". Clarity indeed is a major ingredient of the Guru's feelings. But very distant from Lao Tzu's "mysterious levelling", the Guru exalts and feels exalted.

Thus the feelings and reactions in the acquiescence of the *Tāo* and *Ek-Oamkār* have been a blend of similarities and differences. This highlights the fact that the Powers that induced those feelings/ reactions had to be similar and different from each other.

NOTES

- 1 (Tr.) *The Way and Its Power*, Arthur Waley (Henceforth only chapters stated).
- 2 Kirpal Singh, *The Japuji*.
- 3 Holmes Welch, *Parting of the Way*, pp. 7-8.
- 4 Fritj of Capra, *The Tāo Physics*, p. 48.
- 5 ਕਥਨਾ ਕਥੀ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਤੋਟਿ॥
ਕਥਿ ਕਥਿ ਕਥੀ ਕੋਟੀ ਕੋਟਿ ਕੋਟਿ॥ *Gurū Granth*, p. 2
- 6 ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਵੇਖਣਿ ਸੁਣਣਿ ਨ ਅੰਤੁ॥
ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਕਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਮੰਤੁ॥
ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਕੀਤਾ ਆਕਾਰੁ॥
ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ॥
ਅੰਤੁ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਬਿਲਲਾਹਿ॥
ਤਾ ਕੇ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਪਾਏ ਜਾਹਿ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 5
- 7 ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵੈ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਆਪੇ ਸਚਿਆਰੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 2
- 8 ਸਾਗਰ ਮਹਿ ਬੂੰਦ ਬੂੰਦ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਬੁਝੈ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਾਣੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 878
- 9 ਘਰ ਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਭਰਪੂਰੁ ਹੈ ਮਨਮੁਖਾ ਸਾਦੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ॥
ਜਿਉ ਕਸਤੂਰੀ ਮਿਰਗੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਝੁਮਦਾ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਇਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 644
- 10 W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, p. 167.

- 11 ਬਾਪਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਇ॥ Gurū Granth, p. 2
 12 ਨਿਰਗੁਨੁ ਆਪਿ ਸਰਗੁਨੁ ਭੀ ਓਹੀ॥
 ਕਲਾ ਧਾਰਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਗਲੀ ਮੋਹੀ॥ Ibid., p. 287
 13 ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਨੈਨ ਨਨ ਨੈਨ ਹਹਿ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਉ ਸਹਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਨਾ ਏਕ ਤ੍ਰੋਹੀ॥
 ਸਹਸ ਪਦ ਬਿਮਲ ਨਨ ਏਕ ਪਦ ਗੰਧ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਗੰਧ ਇਵ ਚਲਤ ਮੋਹੀ॥ Ibid., p. 13
 14 ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ॥ Ibid., p. 1
 15 ਜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ ਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ॥
 ਬਾਬੁ ਕਲਾ ਆਡਾਣੁ ਰਹਾਇਆ॥ Ibid., p. 1036
 16 ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ॥
 ਤਿਸਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰਿਆਉ॥
 ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਵਣ ਕਹਾ ਵੀਚਾਰ॥ Ibid., p. 3
 17 ਹਉ ਕਿਆ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਕਿਰਮ ਜੰਤੁ ਵਡੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ॥ Ibid., p. 792
 18 ਜੋ ਉਸਾਰੇ ਸੇ ਵਾਹਸੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ Ibid., p. 934
 19 ਢਾਹਿ ਉਸਾਰੈ ਉਸਰੇ ਢਾਹੈ॥ Ibid., p. 935
 20 ਅਮੁਲੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਅਮੁਲੁ ਦੀਬਾਣੁ॥ ਅਮੁਲੁ ਤੁਲੁ ਅਮੁਲੁ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ॥
 ਅਮੁਲੁ ਬਖਸੀਸ ਅਮੁਲੁ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ॥ ਅਮੁਲੁ ਕਰਮੁ ਅਮੁਲੁ ਫੁਰਮਾਣੁ॥
 ਅਮੁਲੇ ਅਮੁਲੁ ਆਖਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥ Ibid., p. 5
 21 ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ॥ Ibid., p. 2
 22 ਮਾਠਿ ਗੁੰਦਾਈ ਪਟੀਆ ਭਰੀਐ ਮਾਗ ਸੰਧੂਰੇ॥ Ibid., p. 558
 ਅਗੈ ਗਈ ਨਾ ਮੰਨੀਆ ਮਰਊ ਵਿਸੂਰਿ ਵਿਸੂਰੇ॥
 23 ਬਹੁ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਬਹੁ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਪੇਖੇ ਸਰਬ ਢਵੋਲਿ॥ Ibid., p. 265
 ਪੂਜਸਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਅਮੋਲਿ॥
 24 ਅਨੰਦ ਭਇਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਏ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮੈਂ ਪਾਇਆ॥
 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਤ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਹਜ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਵਜੀਆ ਵਾਧਾਈਆ॥
 ਰਾਗ ਰਤਨ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਪਰੀਆ ਸਬਦ ਗਾਵਣ ਆਈਆ॥
 ਸ਼ਬਦੇ ਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਹਰੀ ਕੇਰਾ ਮਨਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਵਸਾਇਆ॥
 ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਆਨੰਦੁ ਹੋਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮੈਂ ਪਾਇਆ॥ Ibid., p. 917

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